-FAKE™

Meet Ryo and Dee, two New York City cops with an attraction for action—and each other!

A psychopath is on the loose, killing kids and cutting off their hands. Ryo's young friend Carol catches the killer's eye and it's up to Bikky, Dee, and Ryo to take the law into their own hands to save her!

As if that weren't enough, Ryo gets an in-depth look at Dee's parentless childhood and the man who inspired Dee to become a cop. But when a little too much information about Dee's de facto dad comes to light, it could destroy Dee's two greatest passions: police work and Ryo!

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SANAMI MATOH

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VOLUME SIX

BY SANAMI MATOH

-FAKE-

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-FAKE-

THE STORY SO FAR...

Meet Ryo aod Dee, two New York City cope with eo ettrectioo for actioo-aod eech other! When aoft-epokeo Detective Raody "Ryo" Macleeo wee treoeferred to the NYPD'e 27th precioct, he was pertoered with Dae Laytoer--a cocky, coofideot cop with attitude to epere. Right from the etart, Dea had etroog faelioge for Ryo and wee oot reluctaot to ehere them. Ryo'e faelioge toward Dee were e myetery to hoth meo...though oaither ceo deoy their exieteoce aoy looger.

Tha detectivee' firet ceee togethar iovolved e drug-releted homicide. Tha victim wee e narcotice emuggler, eurvived ooly hy hie youog eoo Bikky. Though e emart-mouthed etreet puok aod e petty crimioal-io-the-makiog, Bikky helped Dee aod Ryo foil the drug-emuggliog riog thet killed hie fether. Seeing thet the tough-talkiog boy wee actually e frightaned, eed child with oowhere to go, kind-hearted Ryo took Bikky io...much to Dee'e chagrin.

Io their eecond ceee, the datactivee came to the reecue of a youog pickpocket oamed Carol. Carol wea eteeliog wellata to try to get eoough mooey to heil har eick fether out of jeil hefore he diad, hut ehe eoded up pickiog the pocket of e murderer whoee wallet cooteioed e key piece of evideoca. Io order to protect Carol from the killer aod hie cohorte, Ryo let her etay with him temporarily.

Even while Dee aod Ryo'e partoerehip grew ioto a bood of frieodehip, Bikky eod Carol hacame cloee friende ee well, deepite the three yeare hetweeo them.

Back at the praciect, e detective hy the nama of Jemmy "J.J." Adame arrived with a powerful, uoraquited crueh oo Dee left over from their daye at tha Police Academy. To make mattere evan more complicated, Ryo aod Dee aleo ecquired e new eupervieor, Chief Berkeley Roee...who had eo ohvioua crueh oo Ryo.

It weeo't long hefore the emotiooelly exploeive eituetion et the 27th Preciect hecame e literelly exploeive ooe, ae the etetioo wee targeted hy e eeriel-homber. Quick thiokiog hy Ryo aod Dea maoeged to praveot eoy human caeualtiee, hut their huildiog wee a totel gooer. Now, the officere of the 27th are temporerily making the Broox Btetioo their home eway from home...though trouhle hee e wey of fiodiog them--eod their friaode--wherever they go...

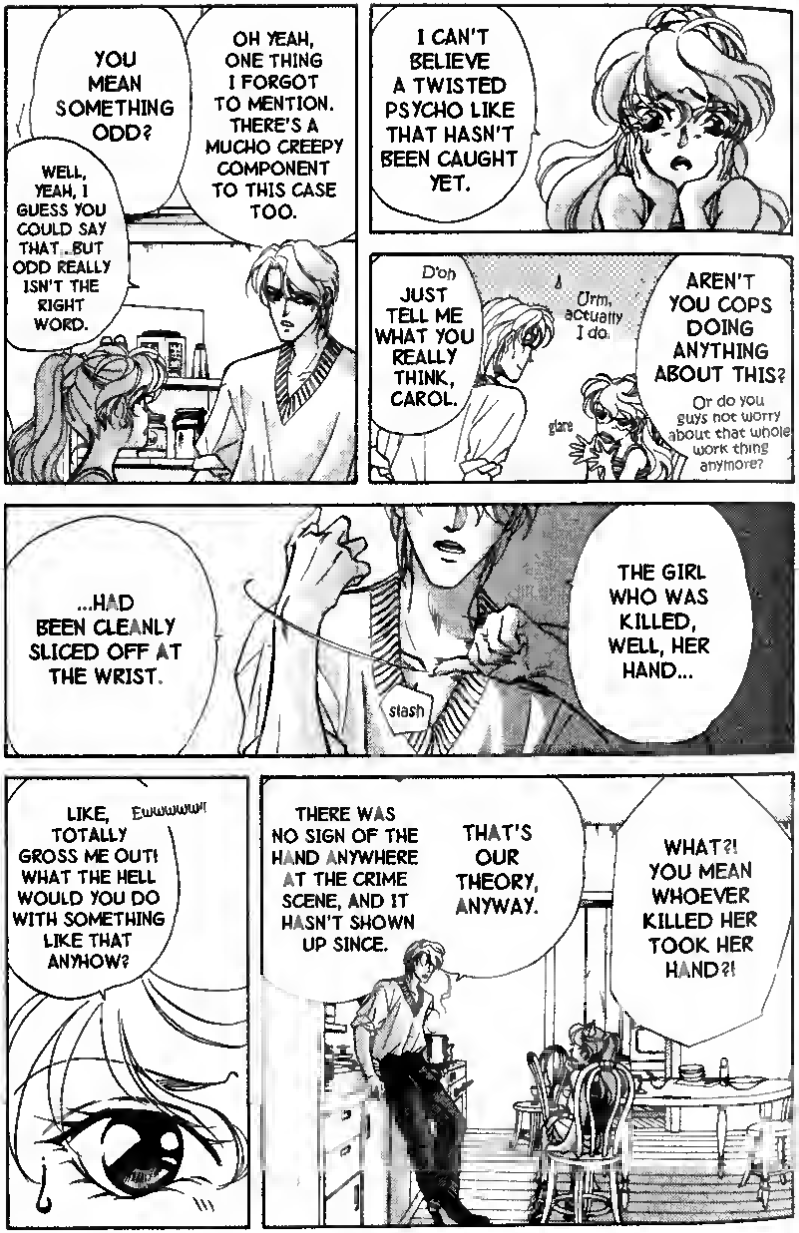
FAKE
フェイク
act.17

EYES?

HMM...NO.
HAVE YOU SPOTTED ANYONE SUSPICIOUS HANGING AROUND?
YEAH. I'VE FELT LIKE THIS FOR ALMOST A WEEK NOW.
YOU MEAN, LIKE, SOMEONE'S WATCHING YOU?

HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
NOT NECESSARILY.
SO I GUESS THAT MEANS I'M JUST IMAGINING EVERYTHING, RIGHT?

FAKE


YOU MEAN SOMETHING ODD?
OH YEAH, ONE THING I FORGOT TO MENTION. THERE'S A MUCHO CREEPY COMPONENT TO THIS CASE TOO.
WELL, YEAH, I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT...BUT ODD REALLY ISN'T THE RIGHT WORD.
I CAN'T BELIEVE A TWISTED PSYCHO LIKE THAT HASN'T BEEN CAUGHT YET.
D'oh
JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU REALLY THINK, CAROL.
Urm, actually I do.
glare
AREN'T YOU COPS DOING ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?
Or do you guys not worry about that whole work thing anymore?
...HAD BEEN CLEANLY SLICED OFF AT THE WRIST.
stash
THE GIRL WHO WAS KILLED, WELL, HER HAND...
LIKE, TOTALLY GROSS ME OUT! WHAT THE HELL WOULD YOU DO WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT ANYHOW?
Ewwwwww!
THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THE HAND ANYWHERE AT THE CRIME SCENE, AND IT HASN'T SHOWN UP SINCE.
THAT'S OUR THEORY, ANYWAY.
WHAT?! YOU MEAN WHOEVER KILLED HER TOOK HER HAND?!
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT?
WE THINK SHE WAS KILLED BY A STALKER.
ABOUT A MONTH AGO, WE CAME ACROSS A MURDER SCENE INVOLVING A GIRL WHO WAS CLOSE TO YOUR AGE.
THE GIRL KEPT FREAKING OUT, TELLING HER PARENTS AND FRIENDS SHE FELT LIKE SOMEONE WAS WATCHING HER.
WELL, WE HAVEN'T CAUGHT THE KILLER BUT, RIGHT BEFORE SHE DIED...
AFTER A BIT OF QUESTIONING...
IT TURNED OUT HER FRIENDS HAD NOTICED A SUSPICIOUS FIGURE HANGING AROUND.

I DON'T CARE IF YOU THINK YOU'RE FREAKING OUT AT SOMETHING MINOR-- JUST CALL, OKAY?
OR, YOU CAN GO WITH DOOR NUMBER THREE AND GET ME HERE, AT HOME.
YEP.
A CELL PHONE?
TWO WILL GIVE YOU A DIRECT LINE TO THE BRONX PRECINCT.
HIT ONE ON SPEED DIAL AND YOU'LL GO RIGHT TO DEE'S CELL.
1.
2.
I HAVE ANOTHER ONE, COURTESY OF THE PRECINCT. THIS IS MY PERSONAL PHONE.
DON'T SWEAT THAT.
BUT IF I TAKE THIS ONE, YOU WON'T HAVE A PHONE, RYO.
NOW THEN, WHY DON'T YOU GO TAKE A SHOWER BEFORE BIKKY AND DEE GET BACK, HMM?
YOU'RE VERY WELCOME.
THANKS, RYO. LOVE YOU.
KISS

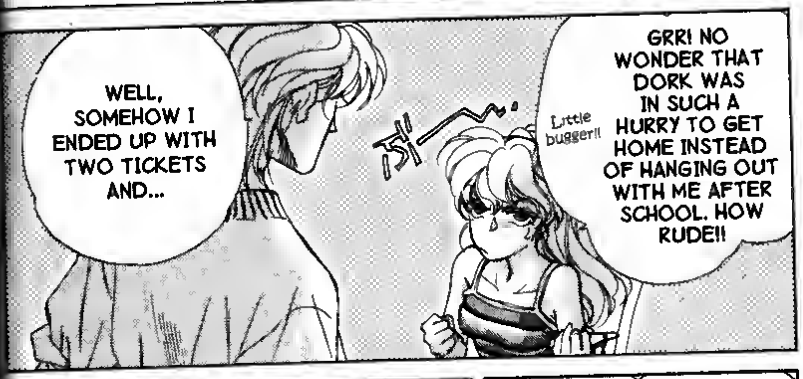
THAT'S TOTALLY SICK TOO! WILL YOU QUIT WITH THE HORROR STORIES ALREADY?
Eeuuu uuuuu!
WELL, SOME PEOPLE KEEP RABBITS' FEET AS GOOD LUCK CHARMS. MAYBE IT'S SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. HMMM.
OH YEAH, AS IF A DINKY PROMISE LIKE THAT'S GONNA MAKE ME FEEL ANY BETTER AFTER ALL THE CREEPY STUFF YOU JUST TOLD ME?!
Ha ha
ALL RIGHT. I WON'T SAY ANY MORE, I PROMISE.
OH, I KNOW. HOLD ON A SEC.
?
HERE YOU GO, CAROL. TAKE THIS WITH YOU.

ピンポーン
Hi!

Click
HEY, WELCOME BACK, GUYS.

WE'RE BACK!!
Nyaaaa!
Hmph

THE KNICKS ARE PLAYING THE BULLS AT HOME TODAY, SO THEY'RE OVER AT THE GARDEN.
AT AN NBA GAME.
SPEAKING OF... WHERE ARE THOSE TWO, ANYWAY?


WELL, SOMEHOW I ENDED UP WITH TWO TICKETS AND...
Little bugger!!
GRR! NO WONDER THAT DORK WAS IN SUCH A HURRY TO GET HOME INSTEAD OF HANGING OUT WITH ME AFTER SCHOOL. HOW RUDE!!

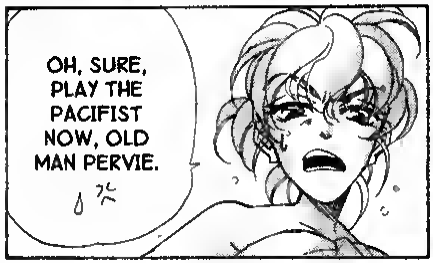
YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND, MILADY.
ONLY IF YOU PROMISE TO PUT MUCHO ONIONS INTO THAT PASTA YOU'RE MAKING TONIGHT.

SORRY, CAROL. FORGIVE ME?
...WELL, YOU KNOW HOW BIG OF A BULLS' FAN BIKKY IS, SO I ASKED DEE TO TAKE HIM.

Yay!
OKEY DOKE, THEN. YOU'RE FORGIVEN.

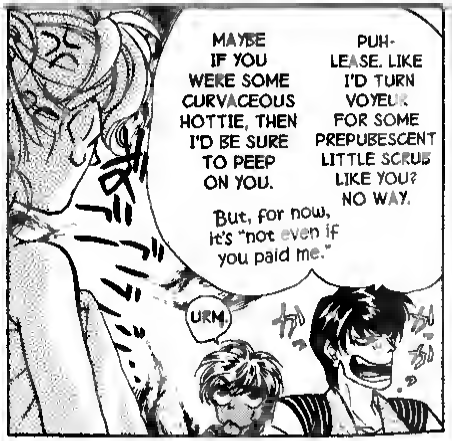
AS IF. I'M GOING FIRST.
I'M GOING FIRST!!
YOU KNOW WHAT? YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE KID! SHOW YOUR ELDERS SOME RESPECT AND GO SECOND, MONKEY!
Gyaah!
SHUT THE HELL UP!
Gyaah!
OH YEAH? YOU'RE A BIG GROWNUP! SHOW A LITTLE PATIENCE AND GO SECOND, OCTOPUS LIPS!!
?!
MEANWHILE, I MADE PASTA FOR DINNER TONIGHT. YOU GUYS HUNGRY?
Ha ha
Friggin morons
Knicks Fan
I MEAN, WHAT THE HELL? YOU UNDERSTAND YOU TRAITORS SUPPORT A GIANT RED COW, RIGHT?
Grr!
THEN HOW ABOUT YOU DON'T EAT AT ALL?
I wanna go vegetarian today. Vegan, even
DEPENDS. YOU PUTTING COW MEAT IN IT? BECAUSE I WON'T EAT IT IF IT DOES.
HELL, YEAH!! THE BULLS TOOK IT RIGHT AT THE BUZZER. IT WAS AWESOME!
JUDGING FROM THAT LOOK ON DEE'S FACE, I'D SAY THE BULLS WON TONIGHT?
I thought it sucked
Pfft
23
HMM?!
THE PHONE'S RINGING.
twitch
THINK I'M GONNA HIT THE SHOWERS BEFORE WE EAT.
Later, loser.

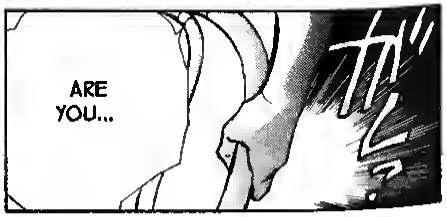
YOU DON'T BELIEVE US?! I'M THE ONE IN DISBELIEF, YOU FREAKIN' GORILLA GIRL!!
My motto is make love, not war, remember?


OH, SURE, PLAY THE PACIFIST NOW, OLD MAN PERVIE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE GALL OF YOU TWO!! HOW DARE YOU PEEK ON ME WHILE I'M IN THE SHOWER?!
Perverts!!
It wasn't on purpose
Owie!

...QUITE DONE YET?!
GRRR RRRRR.
UH, OH
YIPE!


MAYBE IF YOU WERE SOME CURVACEOUS HOTTIE, THEN I'D BE SURE TO PEEP ON YOU.
PUH-LEASE. LIKE I'D TURN VOYEUR FOR SOME PREPUBESCENT LITTLE SCRUB LIKE YOU? NO WAY.
But, for now, it's "not even if you paid me."
URM


ARE YOU...

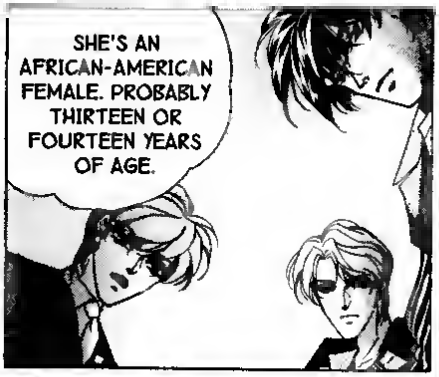
OOPS.

KY...

KYAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!
ACK!!
OWW!!

DEE, RYO, THIS WAY, PLEASE.

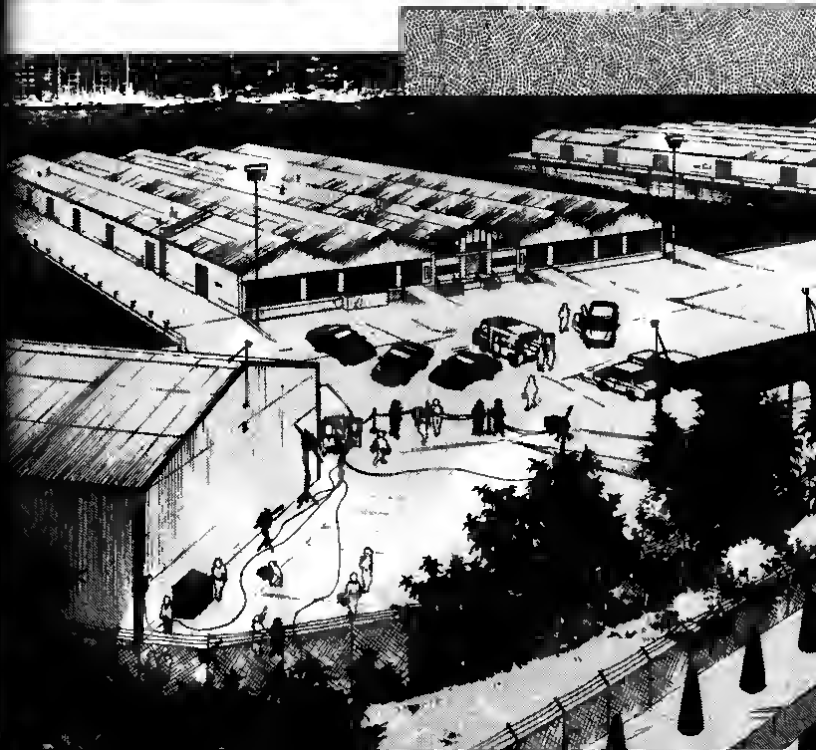
DETEC-TIVES.
THANK YOU FOR COMING.
SORRY FOR TAKING SO LONG, CAPTAIN SMITH.


SHE'S AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE. PROBABLY THIRTEEN OR FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE.

NO PROBLEM, SIR.
I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU ON YOUR DAY OFF, BUT WE'RE SHORT-HANDED AND I NEED YOU TWO TO FIND OUT WHO OUR VIC IS.

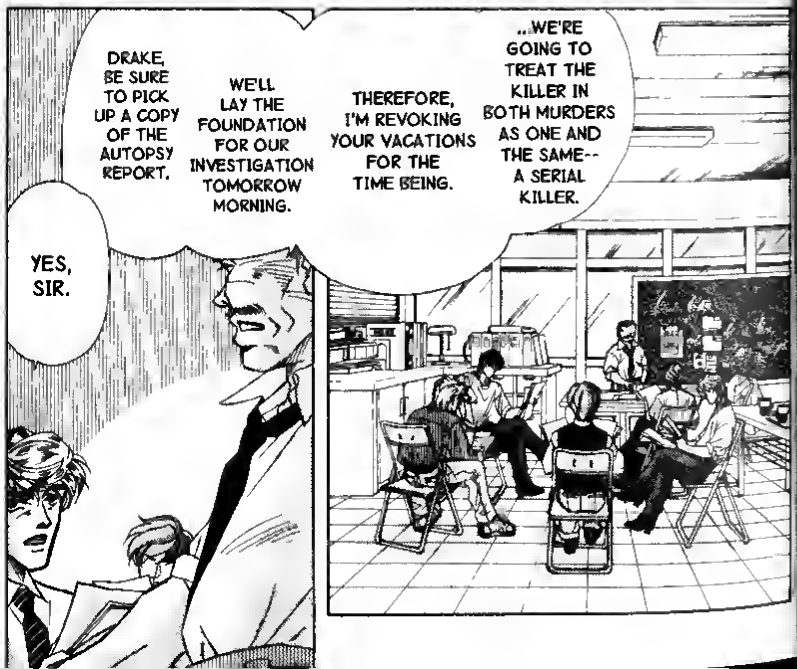
HUH?
?!
DEE!

WE'RE UP. THEY FOUND A BODY DUMPED AT A WAREHOUSE IN BROOKLYN!

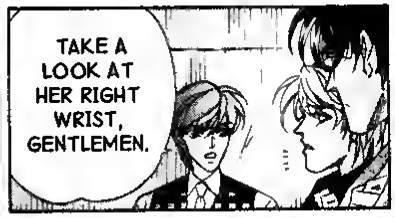


THIS VICTIM'S RIGHT HAND WAS SLICED OFF AND TAKEN.
JUST LIKE THE STALKING INCIDENT FROM A MONTH AGO...

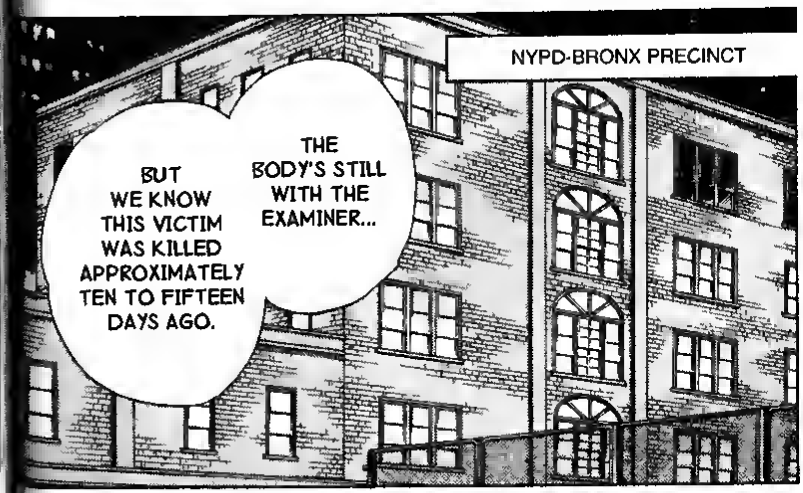
THIS TIME, THE VIC'S BEEN STABBED. WHILE THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THIS WAS MERELY A COPYCAT...
THE VICTIM IN THE FIRST MURDER WAS STRANGLED.


YES, SIR.
DRAKE, BE SURE TO PICK UP A COPY OF THE AUTOPSY REPORT.
WE'LL LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR INVESTIGATION TOMORROW MORNING.
THEREFORE, I'M REVOKING YOUR VACATIONS FOR THE TIME BEING.
...WE'RE GOING TO TREAT THE KILLER IN BOTH MURDERS AS ONE AND THE SAME-- A SERIAL KILLER.

SHE'S ABOUT CAROL'S AGE. POOR THING.

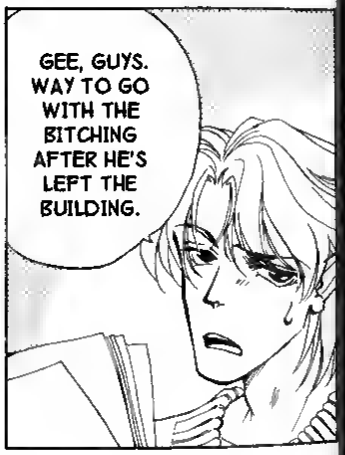

TAKE A LOOK AT HER RIGHT WRIST, GENTLEMEN.

OH...


NYPD-BRONX PRECINCT
BUT WE KNOW THIS VICTIM WAS KILLED APPROXIMATELY TEN TO FIFTEEN DAYS AGO.
THE BODY'S STILL WITH THE EXAMINER...

UggyaahhHH!!
Gyaaahh!
Gyaaahh
LIKE HE EVEN HAD TO DISMISS US. I'M OUT OF HERE ALREADY!!
YEAH, AND WHY DON'T YOU GET OFF YOUR LAZY WALRUS ASS AND PICK UP THE DAMN AUTOPSY REPORT YOURSELF, YOU SLAVE DRIVER!!
OH SURE, EASY FOR HIM TO SAY RIGHT AFTER HE JUST TOOK A VACATION!!
WHAT THE HELL? THAT FRIGGIN' BADGER BASTARD!!
UH HUH♪
And I had tomorrow off, dammit!!
Fuck You!

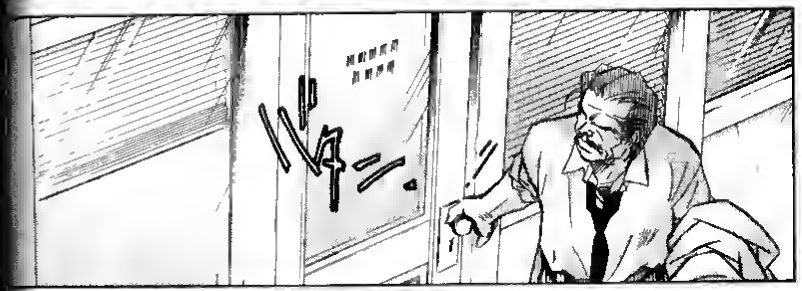
YEAH! YEAH!!
DAMMIT, RYO, DON'T YOU EVER GET SICK OF BEING THE GOODIE-GOODIE BROWN-NOSER?!

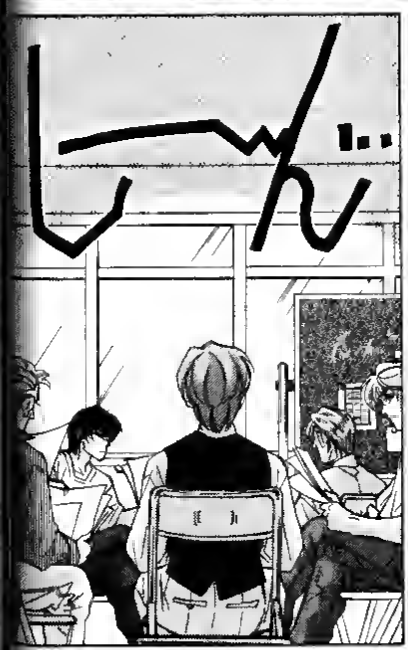

GEE, GUYS. WAY TO GO WITH THE BITCHING AFTER HE'S LEFT THE BUILDING.

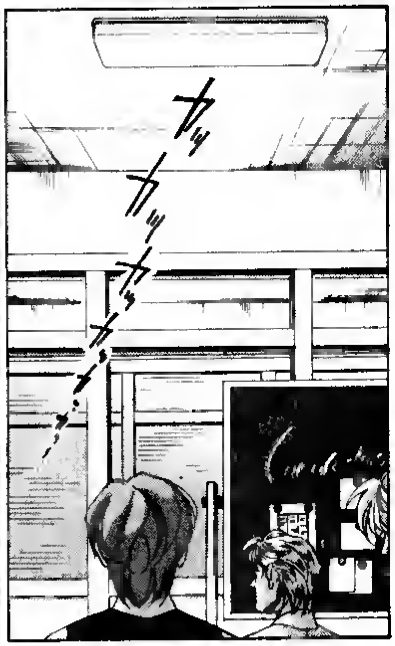
AND ALL THIS TIME I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON DEE'S SIDE. HOW RUDE!
I beg your pardon?
You guys are a seriously sad group of whiners.
Barge
I'M NOT BROWN-NOSING, I'M JUST TELLING IT LIKE IT IS.

I TRUSTED YOU SO HOW COULD YOU?
Liar
YOU LOUSY SCAB!!
YOU BAS-TARD!
Goddamn!!
I GET IT. Oh! YOU'RE THE CHIEF'S LITTLE LAP-BITCH, AREN'T YOU?!
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT--I'M NOT ON ANYONE'S SIDE, OKAY?
Why do you always have to be so melodramatic?

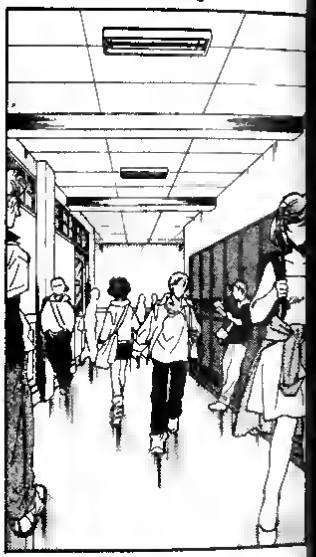
SEE YOU BOYS TOMORROW.
EVERYONE BUT THIRD SHIFT'S DISMISSED.
FOR NOW, THOUGH...

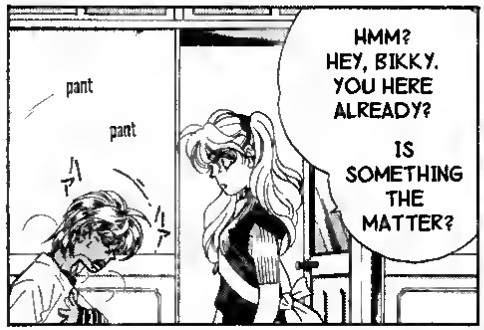






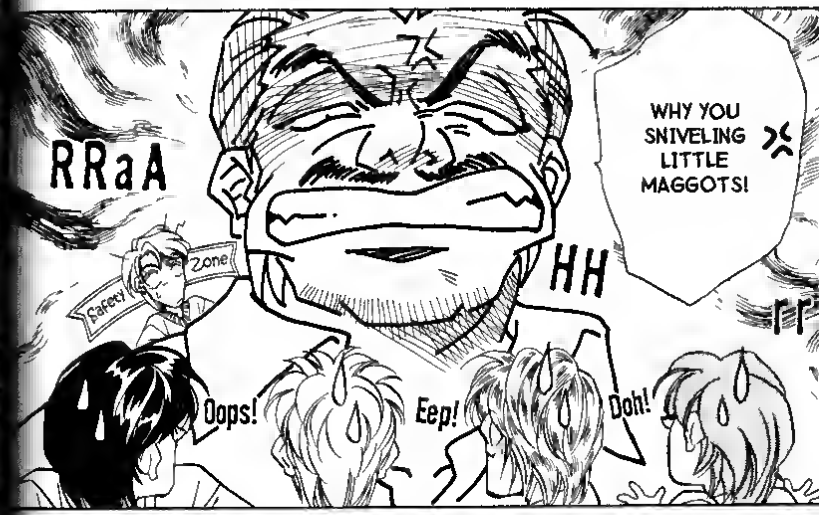
CAROL!




pant
pant
HMM? HEY, BIKKY. YOU HERE ALREADY?
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

WHAT?! WHY?
Boo!!
BUT I CAN'T GO HOME WITH YOU TODAY.
I'M SORRY...

OH.


RRaA
HH
WHY YOU SNIVELING LITTLE MAGGOTS!
Safety Zone
Oops!
Eep!
Doh!

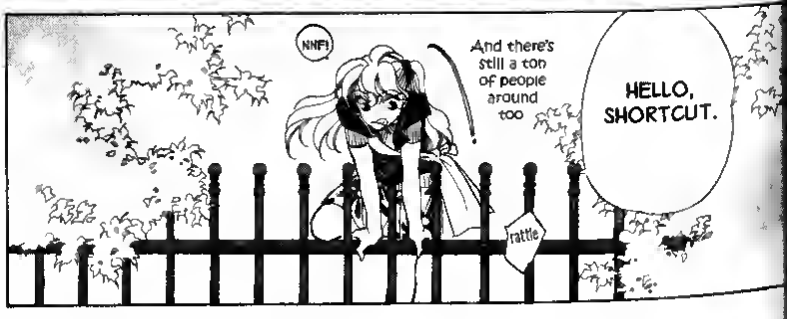
I'M GOING HOME.
'NIGHT, GUYS.
DUDE!! JJ JUST GOT CRUSHED, MAN!!
RUN AWAY!! RETREAT!!
flee
WNOA!! IT'S A MEGA-CHIEF!!
HOW CAN YOU TURN ON US LIKE THAT WNEN WE'RE JUST TELLING IT LIKE IT IS?!
flee
flee
RAAHHRR!
WHO ARE YOU LOSERS CALLING A WALRUS AND A BADGER? YOU LILY-LIVERED IDIOTS!!
UKYAA!!

...I SHOULD TAKE A DIFFERENT ROUTE HOME.
JUST TO BE EXTRA SAFE...

LET'S SEE...
glance

THE PARK!

I SHOULD CHANGE MY ROUTINE.
IF SOMEONE IS FOLLOWING ME...


NNF!
And there's still a ton of people around too
HELLO, SHORTCUT.
rattle

BUT WHAT IF SOME WEIRDO REALLY IS STALKING YOU? WHAT THEN?!
OH, WELL. I GUESS I'LL BE OKAY IF I GO HOME NOW WHILE IT'S STILL LIGHT OUTSIDE.

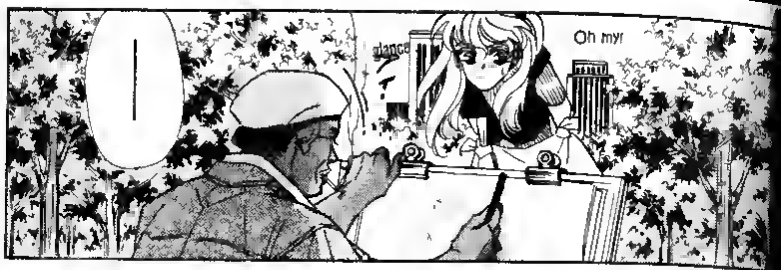
I'm really sorry.
WELL, I GOT MY TEST BACK TODAY AND I COMPLETELY MESSED EVERYTHING UP. THE TEACHER-FROM-HELL IS MAKING ME STAY AFTER SCHOOL FOR THE REVIEW CLASS.

I SEE.

IT'S BETTER THAN ANY OTHER GOOD LUCK CHARM OUT THERE. I'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
DON'T SWEAT IT, BIKKY. LOOK AT WHAT RYO GAVE ME.

I HOPE SHE'LL BE OKAY.

Urm
CAROL?
Bye. SEE YOU TOMORROW. GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR REVIEW, OKAY?


Oh my!
dance

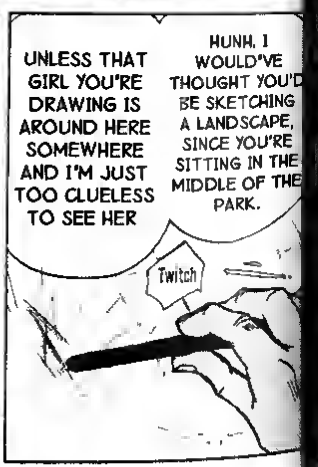
WELL, IN THAT CASE, I GUESS HE WON'T MIND ME WATCHING.
Sit

UMM, EXCUSE ME FOR ASKING, BUT ARE YOU DRAWING SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT ANYONE TO SEE?

NO. NOT REALLY.

I'M REALLY SORRY. I'M RAMBLING, AREN'T I? MY FRIENDS ALWAYS TELL ME I TALK TOO MUCH.

.....
Oops


UNLESS THAT GIRL YOU'RE DRAWING IS AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE AND I'M JUST TOO CLUELESS TO SEE HER
HUNH. I WOULD'VE THOUGHT YOU'D BE SKETCHING A LANDSCAPE, SINCE YOU'RE SITTING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PARK.
Twitch

WHAT'RE YOU DRAWING?

UH HUH.
IS THIS GIRL YOUR DAUGHTER?
Forget about it
IT'S ALL RIGHT. MY DAUGHTER TALKS TOO MUCH TOO.
COULD I COME WATCH YOU DRAW AGAIN?
HUH? I GUESS SO. I'M USUALLY HERE AROUND THIS TIME.
WILL YOU BE HERE AGAIN TOMORROW?
Bye!!
I HAVE TO GO HOME NOW BECAUSE IT'S GETTING DARK, BUT I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN TOMORROW, OKAY?
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO.
I DO. ♡

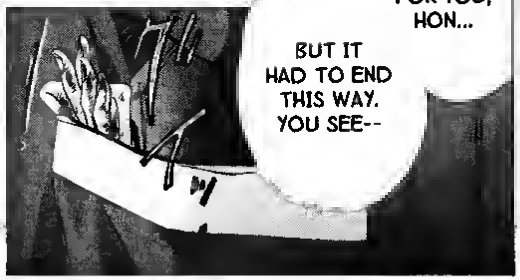
Huff Huff
WAIT! PLEASE!
H-HELP ME!!
AUUUHH!!

AND JUST WHO MIGHT THIS KILLER BE, HMM?

YII I!!

Huff.
PLEASE... HELP ME.
Grab
I... I DON'T WANT TO DIE... P-PLEASE... HELP.
Huff.
Huff.
HE'S... GOING... TO KILL ME!!
Hahh...

SO SAD, TOO BAD, FOR YOU, HON...


BUT IT HAD TO END THIS WAY. YOU SEE--

--I'VE ALREADY FOUND YOUR REPLACE-MENT.

KYAAHHH!

UHK-- GHA--
AAA HH HHHI

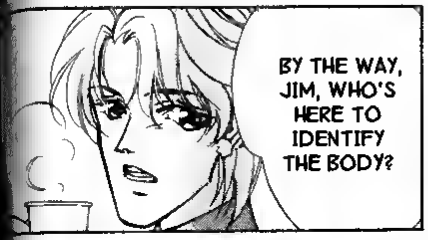
NYPD. BRONX PRECINCT
DAAAHHH!! SOMEONE, ANYONE, THROW ME A FREAKIN' BONE, ALREADY!!
ACTUALLY, SOMEONE'S HERE RIGHT NOW.
NO ONE'S COME FORWARD TO I.D. THE BODY YET, RIGHT?
YO.
JIM.
ONLY WE'D DISCOVERED THE BODY A FEW DAYS EARLIER...
THE EXAMINER WASN'T ABLE TO FIND ANYTHING USEFUL ON THE CORPSE. EITHER.
SHEESH! THREE DAYS ON THE CASE AND NOT ONE FRIGGIN' BREAK.

Bye.

THAT WAY, WE CAN RELEASE HER TO YOU.
I'LL NEED YOUR SIGNATURE ON THESE DOCU-MENTS.
IF YOU'RE POSITIVE THIS IS YOUR DAUGH-TER, SIR...

MR. JACKSON?

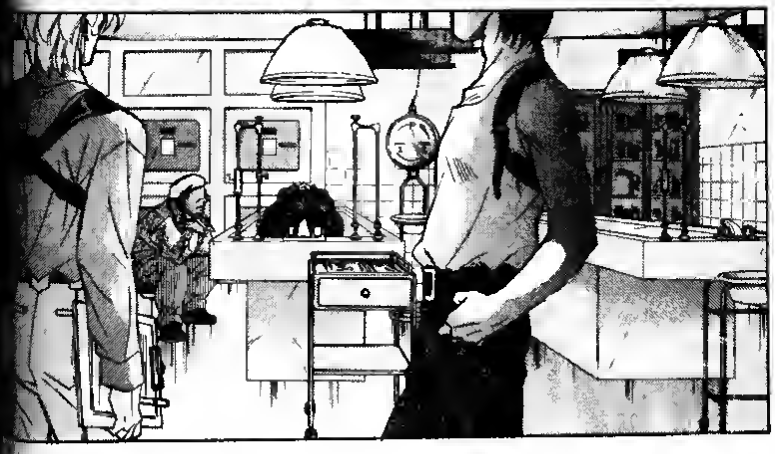
...THAT'S ME.


BY THE WAY, JIM, WHO'S HERE TO IDENTIFY THE BODY?

HER FATHER.

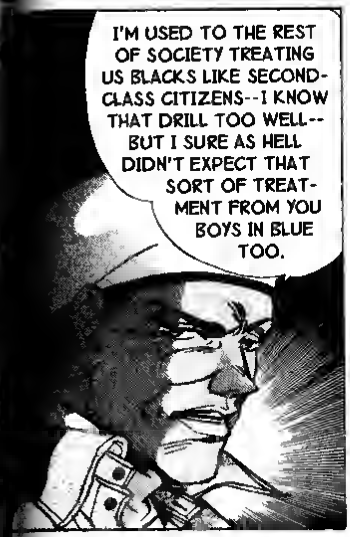
OOH, THANKS, MAN.
MAYBE NEXT TIME, YOU'LL CARE ENOUGH TO PICK IT UP YOURSELVES
HERE'S THE REPORT ON THE VICTIM'S POSSES-SIONS.
Ha. ha. Sorry, we totally forgot.
Yay! I've been waiting for this
Take it, you lumps.

CORONER'S ROOM

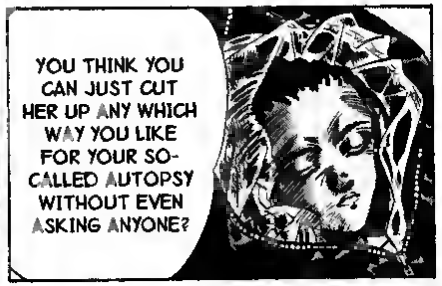


DEE, RYO!! YOU GUYS HERE?!

TOO BAD YOU COULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT WHEN YOU FOUND THE FIRST GIRL.

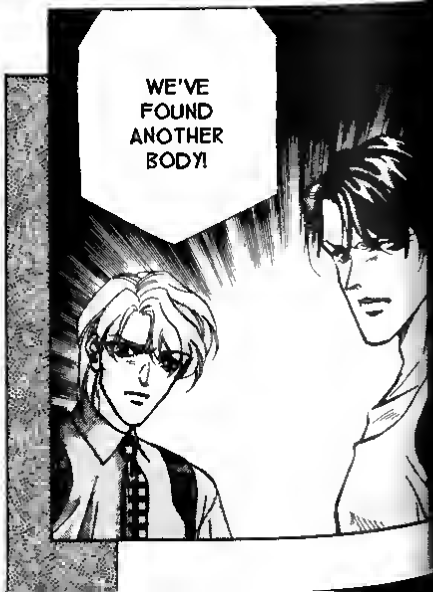

I'M USED TO THE REST OF SOCIETY TREATING US BLACKS LIKE SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS--I KNOW THAT DRILL TOO WELL-- BUT I SURE AS HELL DIDN'T EXPECT THAT SORT OF TREAT-MENT FROM YOU BOYS IN BLUE TOO.

SIR?
DOES THIS HAPPEN TO YOUR WHITE VICTIMS TOO?

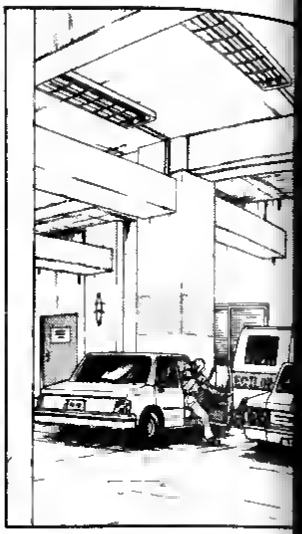

YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST CUT HER UP ANY WHICH WAY YOU LIKE FOR YOUR SO-CALLED AUTOPSY WITHOUT EVEN ASKING ANYONE?

Huff
HE DID IT AGAIN... A THIRD VICTIM.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
DRAKE?

DEE!
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
HEY, WATCH IT--

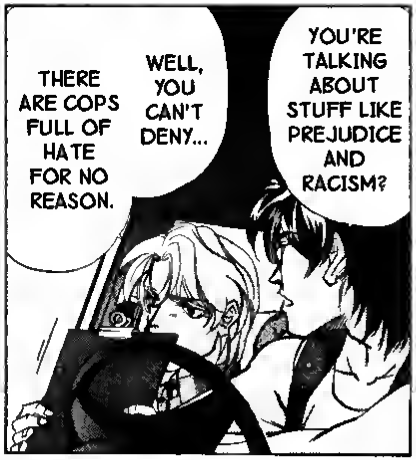

WE'VE FOUND ANOTHER BODY!

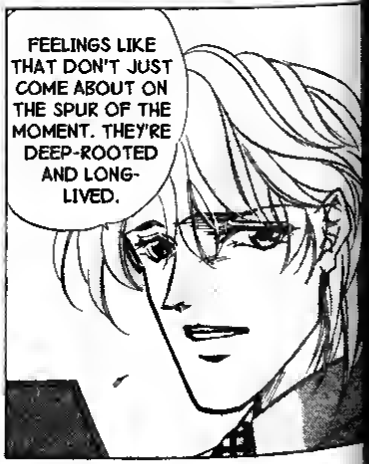
WE NEED INFORMATION IF WE'RE GOING TO KEEP THIS FROM HAPPENING TO ANYONE ELSE.
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, SIR. MORE THAN ANYTHING, WE WANT TO CATCH THE BASTARD THAT DID THIS.
I'M VERY SORRY, SIR... BUT HER BODY WAS SO BADLY DECOMPOSED THAT WE HAD TO PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY. IT WAS OUR ONLY CHANCE AT FINDING SOME SORT OF EVIDENCE.



HMM?
AY...ABOUT THAT GIRL'S FATHER EARLIER...

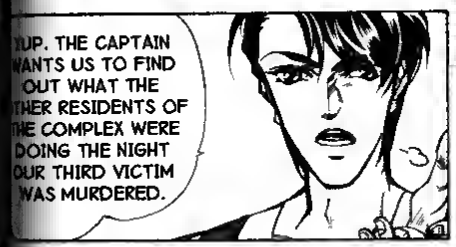
THAT WOULD HAVE HELPED AT ALL.
I DON'T THINK...
THAT DUDE, JACKSON. WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL HIM YOU WERE HALF JAPANESE? THAT WOULD HAVE STOPPED HIS TIRADE JUST LIKE THAT.


THERE ARE COPS FULL OF HATE FOR NO REASON.
WELL, YOU CAN'T DENY...
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT STUFF LIKE PREJUDICE AND RACISM?


FEELINGS LIKE THAT DON'T JUST COME ABOUT ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT. THEY'RE DEEP-ROOTED AND LONG-LIVED.

RYO.

SOUTH BROADWAY, HUH? IT'S PRETTY CLOSE BY.


YUP. THE CAPTAIN WANTS US TO FIND OUT WHAT THE OTHER RESIDENTS OF THE COMPLEX WERE DOING THE NIGHT OUR THIRD VICTIM WAS MURDERED.

THERE WAS A MISSING PERSON'S REPORT FILED FOR HER. HERE'S HER HOME ADDRESS.
I GOT THE I.D. ON OUR THIRD VICTIM.

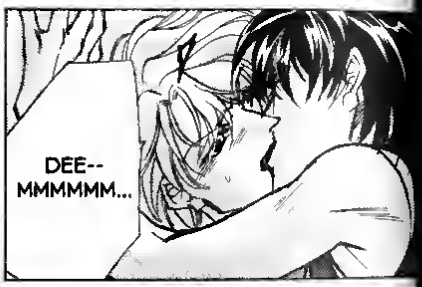
WELL, THEN.
SHALL WE?

thump

I SUPPOSE YOU COULD LOOK AT IT THAT WAY, BUT--
GEEZ. YOU CAN IGNORE IT IF YOU WANT TO, BUT IT PISSES ME OFF, MAN.

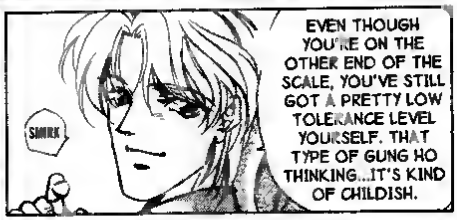
IF HE THOUGHT YOU WERE RACIST, THEN WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MAKE HIM? HE'D ALREADY JUDGED YOU TOO.
OKAY, I'M WITH YOU THERE, BUT... THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT THAT YOU TOOK THE BRUNT OF HIS HATRED.

HHNN...


DEE-- MMMMMM...

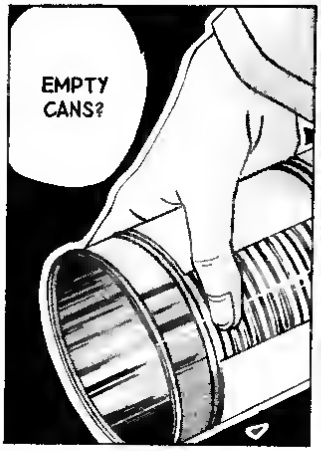
BESIDES?
MAYBE SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED TO HIM THAT CAUSES HIM TO THINK AND ACT THE WAY HE DOES. BESIDES...

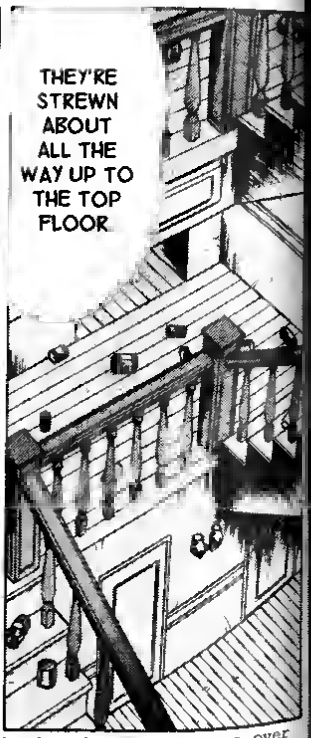
Why you little--


SMIRK
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE ON THE OTHER END OF THE SCALE, YOU'VE STILL GOT A PRETTY LOW TOLERANCE LEVEL YOURSELF. THAT TYPE OF GUNG HO THINKING...IT'S KIND OF CHILDISH.

THAT'S RIGHT. AFTER ALL, I AM A WHOLE YEAR OLDER THAN YOU.
And I'm decades more mature.
Heh heh!
WHAT?! YOU'RE CALLING ME A KID NOW?!

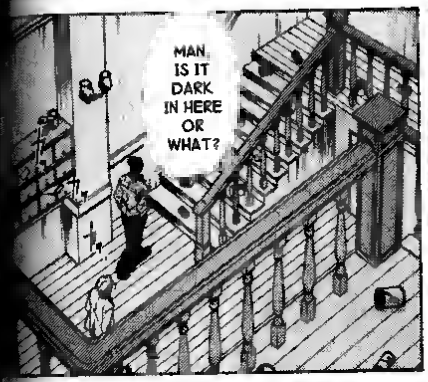
SEE? THAT'S EXACTLY THE KIND OF BEHAVIOR I'M TALKING ABOUT!! SHEESH!
OWW!!
Just drive, damn it. It's late enough as it is.
Geez! Did you really have to hit me for that?
Rawr!
...TREAT ME LIKE A KID!
DON'T YOU DARE...





HE WENT ON QUITE A KILLING SPREE BACK IN THE SIXTIES, YOU KNOW.
THAT'S ANOTHER NAME THEY USED TO CALL THE BOSTON STRANGLER.*
HUH?
YEP.

* A vicious serial killer responsible for the deaths of thirteen women over a three-year period in the Boston area.(1962-1964.)

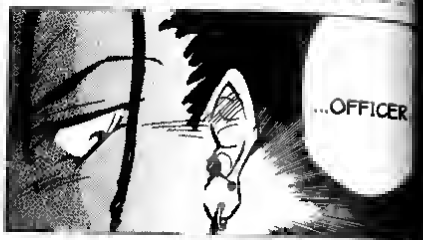


YEP, APARTMENT 502 ON THE FIFTH FLOOR IF YOU NEED TO ASK ME ANYTHING, JUST DROP BY...
AND I'M GUESSING YOU LIVE HERE, SIR?

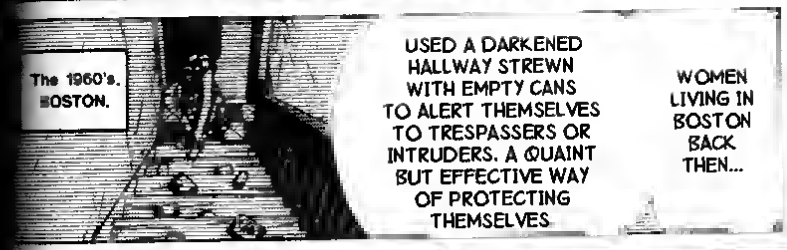
smack
chew

?!

I SAW YOUR BADGE, IS ALL. SEE?
DON'T GET YER PANTIES IN A WAD.


...OFFICER

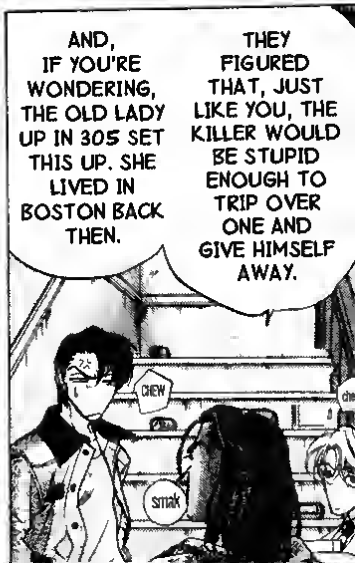
!!


The 1960's. BOSTON.
USED A DARKENED HALLWAY STREWN WITH EMPTY CANS TO ALERT THEMSELVES TO TRESPASSERS OR INTRUDERS. A QUAINT BUT EFFECTIVE WAY OF PROTECTING THEMSELVES
WOMEN LIVING IN BOSTON BACK THEN...

Bye!

GUESS HER GRANDDAUGHTER GOT KILLED OR SOMETHING, SO SHE'S PRETTY FREAKED OUT ABOUT THAT.

OH WELL, AT LEAST IT SAVES ON OUR ELECTRIC BILL.


AND, IF YOU'RE WONDERING, THE OLD LADY UP IN 305 SET THIS UP. SHE LIVED IN BOSTON BACK THEN.
THEY FIGURED THAT, JUST LIKE YOU, THE KILLER WOULD BE STUPID ENOUGH TO TRIP OVER ONE AND GIVE HIMSELF AWAY.
chew
smak

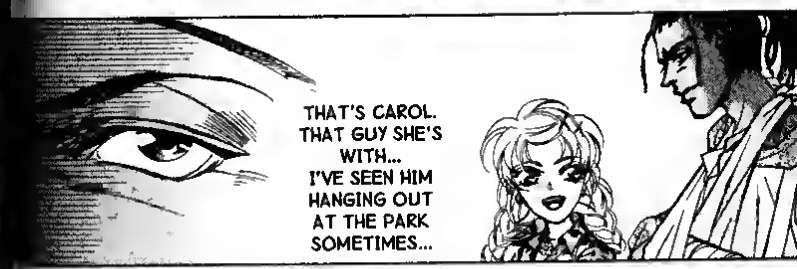
OKAY.
THE AREA NORTH OF THE FOUNTAIN, OKAY?
OH, OKAY. I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU, THEN. ♡
THEN HOW ABOUT I MEET YOU THERE?
After my review, of course
HMM?

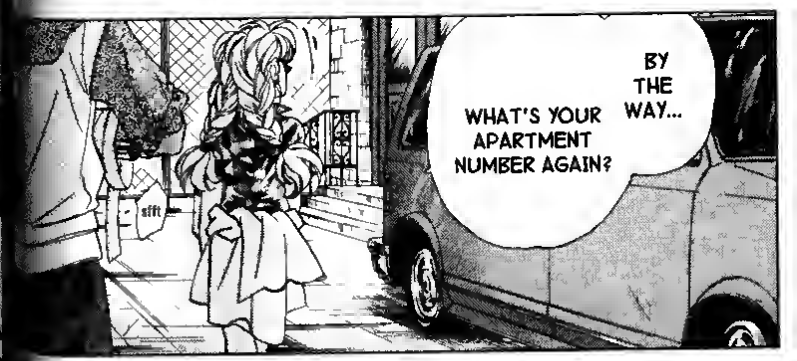
N.Y. CENTER SCHOOL
WHAT?! YOU HAVE TO STAY AFTER AGAIN?!
YEAH. IT'S, LIKE, MY NEW DAILY ROUTINE.
Heh, heh!
YOU GONNA STOP AND SEE THAT OLD ARTIST GUY AT THE PARK AGAIN?
EVEN A DUMMY HAS FEELINGS, YOU KNOW. THAT LAST COMMENT WAS ALMOST PAINFUL!
Urrgh!
WOW, YOU REALLY ARE AN INCREDIBLE DUMMY, AREN'T YOU?
HEY!
Yup
OH WELL, I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO GO HOME ALONE AGAIN.

JUST ACROSS THE WAY. I LIVE IN THAT APARTMENT BUILDING OVER THERE AND, SINCE IT'S SO CLOSE, I FIGURED IT WOULDN'T BE TOO MUCH OF A PROBLEM, BUT...
OHH, YEAH, I'M FINE. THANKS FOR ASKING.
SO, UM, YOUR STUFF... WHERE DO YOU HAVE TO CARRY IT ALL TO?
UH HUH. DIDN'T HAVE MUCH ELSE GOING ON ANYWAY.
YOU SURE?
ALL RIGHT, THEN WHY DON'T I HELP YOU OUT?
Heh
THERE WE GO.
Thanks!
Can you grab my bag for me?
WELL, I THINK I'LL TAKE YOU UP ON YOUR OFFER.

AWW, HE'S NOT HERE TODAY.
Rats!
Now what am I gonna do?
EXCUSE ME...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR?

AUGH!


THAT'S CAROL. THAT GUY SHE'S WITH... I'VE SEEN HIM HANGING OUT AT THE PARK SOMETIMES...

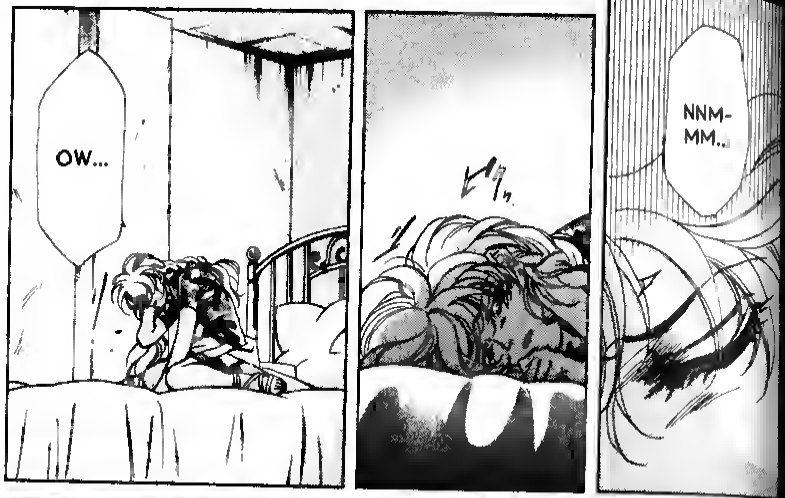

BY THE WAY... WHAT'S YOUR APARTMENT NUMBER AGAIN?
sfft

DAMN IT.
GET AWAY FROM HER!!
grab!
WHUFF!!
--MIND YOUR OWN FUCKIN' BUSINESS!
NEXT TIME, OLD MAN--

HEY!! WHAT'S GOING ON THERE?!
CAROL!!

HEH HEH. THAT TOOK A WHOLE LOT LESS TIME THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD. I MUST BE A GENIUS.
NOTE: A GENIUS WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN IN A REVIEW CLASS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HUNH?
HEY!! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MAN?
S-SOME-BODY...
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE COPS--BUT WE NEED TO GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL FIRST!
P-PLEASE! C-CALL THE P-POLICE.

HMF
.....
8RP 202


OW...
NNM-MM...

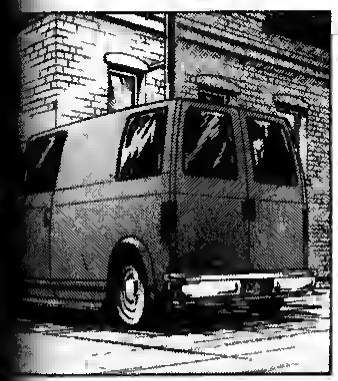
N-NO... THAT GIRL... CAROL... SHE'S...

WHAT ABOUT CAROL?!

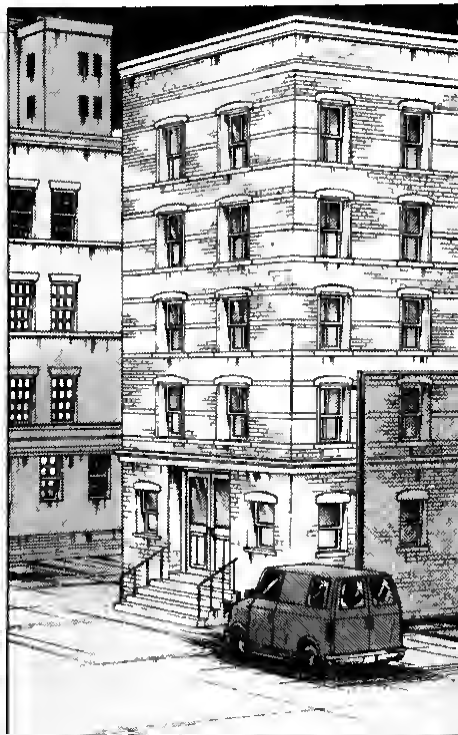
I'M HURT!! BUT HOW--?
BLOOD

DAMN IT!! I GOT TRICKED BIG TIME!
Ouuuuile!

I REMEMBER NOW.
AUGH!



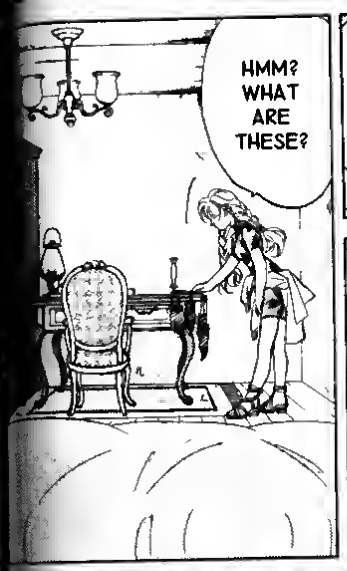
NEW YORK
8RP 202

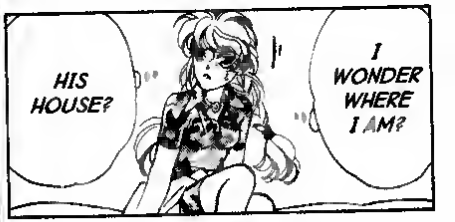


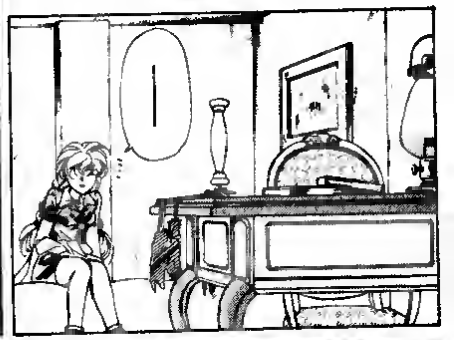
TH-THIS MUST BE THE KILLER THAT RYO WAS TALKING ABOUT!

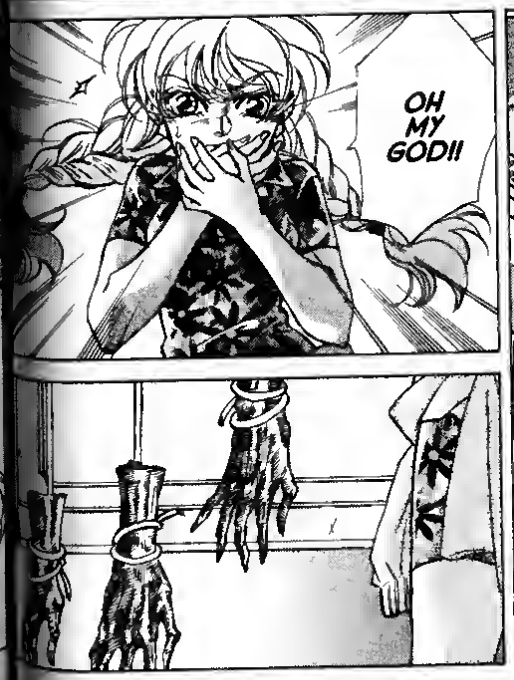
THOSE ARE SOUVENIRS FROM MY FORMER PETS.
THE ONES I KEPT BEFORE YOU.

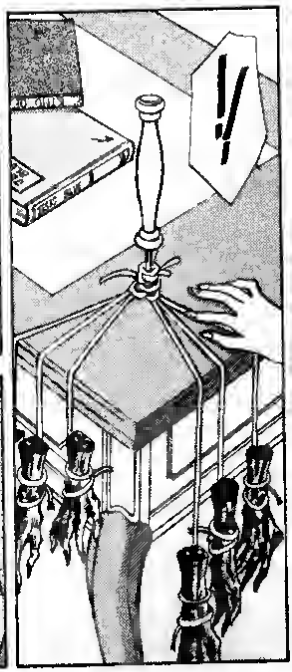
HOPE YOU HAD A NICE NAP... MY SWEET, LITTLE GIRL.


HMM? WHAT ARE THESE?


HIS HOUSE?
I WONDER WHERE I AM?




OH MY GOD!!


!

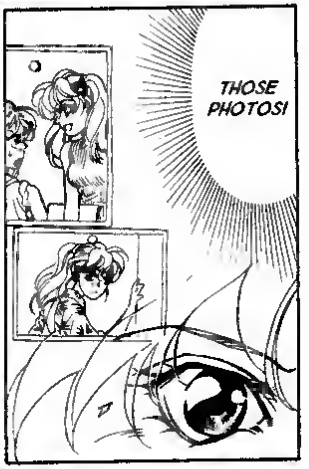
AGGHHH!!

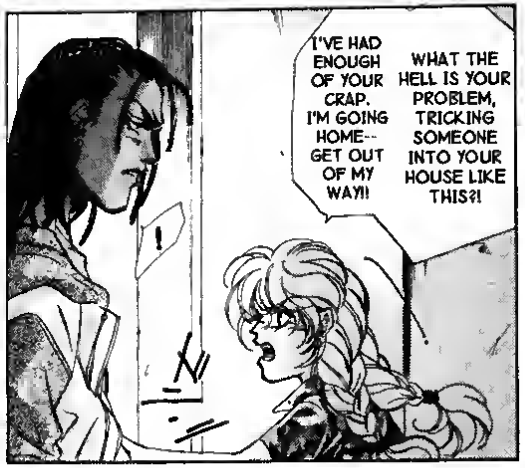
AH WELL, I'M SURE YOU'LL LEARN PROPER DISCIPLINE IN NO TIME.
WHAT BAD MANNERS THIS PET HAS.
Urr ggghh
OH, AND DON'T WORRY-- I'LL BE SURE TO BRING YOU YOUR DISH AT SUPPERTIME.

I'VE DECIDED TO TAKE YOU IN. STARTING TODAY, YOU ARE MINE.

NOW I GET IT. YOU WERE THE ONE FOLLOWING ME AROUND, HUH?

OU T BE OUS!!
GOTTA MAKE SURE A NEW PET HAS THE PERFECT PEDIGREE BEFORE-HAND. ELSE, YOU JUST END UP RETURNING IT, RIGHT?


THOSE PHOTOS!


I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR CRAP. I'M GOING HOME-- GET OUT OF MY WAY!!
WHAT THE HELL IS YOUR PROBLEM, TRICKING SOMEONE INTO YOUR HOUSE LIKE THIS?!

TO WHAT?
NYPD BRONX PRECINCT
ONE MORE MINUTE TO GO.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. WE GET TWELVE HOURS OFF, DON'T WE?
'TIL SHIFT CHANGE, OF COURSE.
WHY SHOULDN'T I? IT'S WAY CLOSER TO WORK THAN MY PLACE.
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO COME TO MY PLACE WHEN YOU GET TIME OFF?
Go feed yourself
Go feed me
I'M COMING TO YOUR HOUSE, OKAY?
WHAT'S UP, GUYS?
ZERO!
creak
What are you, my sister-in-law?
I hate clutter.
Grumble
WELL, WHENEVER YOU VISIT, YOU LEAVE THE ROOM A MESS.
Grumble
OOOH, T-MINUS FIVE... FOUR... THREE... TWO... ONE...

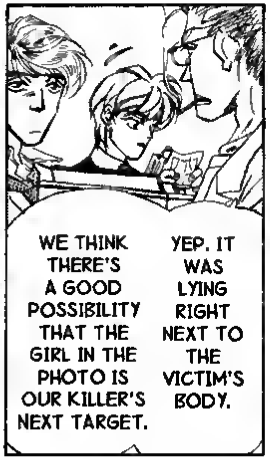
SLEEP WELL, CAROL.
THAT'S A GOOD GIRL. GET SOME REST FOR NOW.
KLIK

ACK!!
YES, SIR!

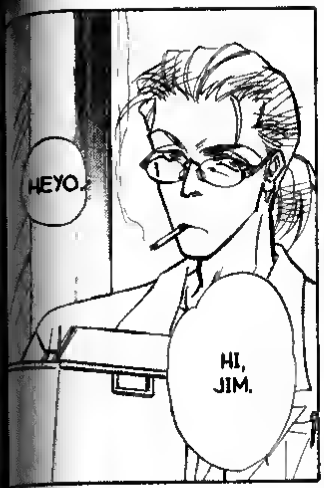
UH HUH OF COURSE, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW YOU'D POSSIBLY LET ME DOWN IF I'M REALLY NOT EXPECTING ANYTHING
You really are a self-centered little snot, aren't you?
Tee hee!
Cross my heart!!
I'LL ENJOY THEM SOOOO MUCH AND GET THEM SOOOO SORTED-- I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, YOU STUD!!

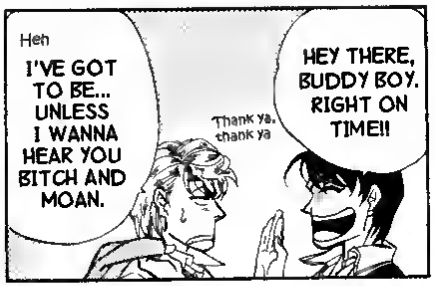
MAYBE. BUT THAT AIN'T MY JOB TO FIND OUT. IT'S YOURS, REMEMBER?
MIGHT EVEN BE A PICTURE OF A GIRL HE OFFED ALREADY.
dump

YUP.
Drive safe Mr. Wonderful. ♥
AND ON THAT FRIGHTENING NOTE, HAVE FUN. LATER.


WE THINK THERE'S A GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT THE GIRL IN THE PHOTO IS OUR KILLER'S NEXT TARGET.
YEP. IT WAS LYING RIGHT NEXT TO THE VICTIM'S BODY.

WAS THIS PICTURE FOUND AT THE CRIME SCENE TOO?
HMM? HOLD ON...

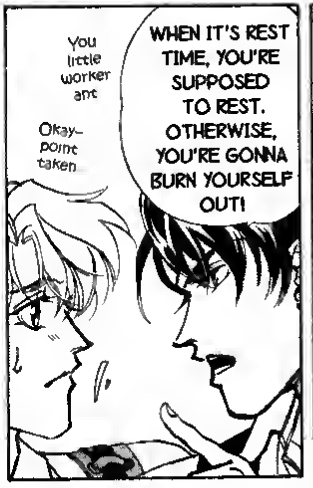

HEYO.
HI, JIM.


Heh
I'VE GOT TO BE... UNLESS I WANNA HEAR YOU BITCH AND MOAN.
Thank ya, thank ya
HEY THERE, BUDDY BOY. RIGHT ON TIME!!

THAT TIME ALREADY, GUYS?

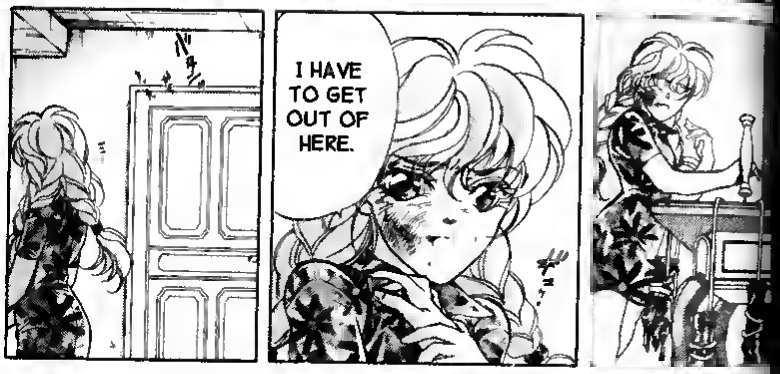
ACTUALLY, IF NO ONE MINDS, I'D REALLY LIKE TO TAKE A LOOK AT--
WHO WANTS IT?
I GOT THE STUFF LEFT AT THE CRIME SCENE ALL TAGGED AND BAGGED.

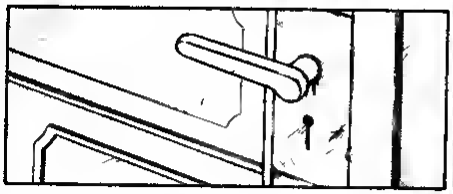
IT'S ALL YERS, DRAKEY. ENJOY!


You little worker ant
Okay- point taken
WHEN IT'S REST TIME, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO REST. OTHERWISE, YOU'RE GONNA BURN YOURSELF OUT!

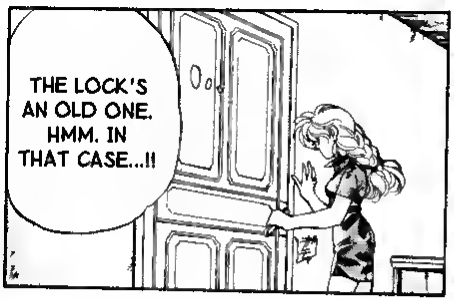
DEE...
JUST HAND OVER THE LOT TO DRAKEY-BOY, JIMBO.

I'VE DECIDED TO TAKE YOU IN. STARTING TODAY, YOU ARE MINE.


I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE.

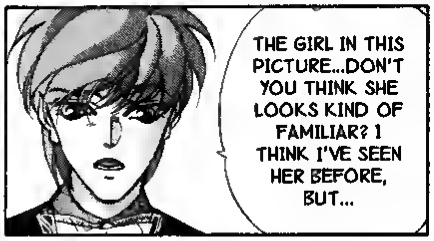


HE WENT OUT?!


THE LOCK'S AN OLD ONE. HMM. IN THAT CASE...!!

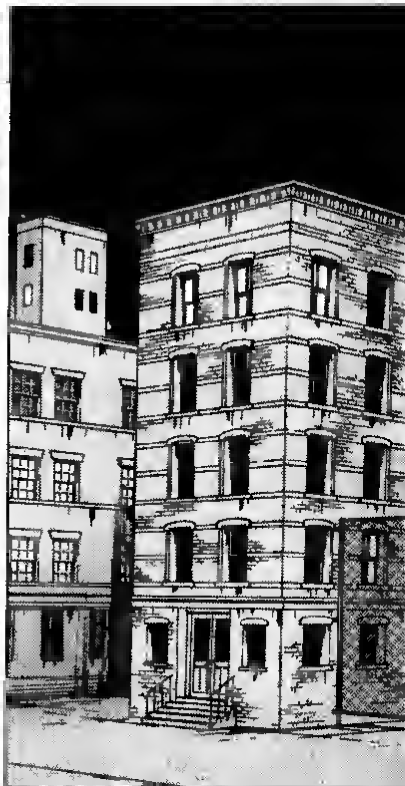
...I JUST DON'T KNOW.

WHAT?


THE GIRL IN THIS PICTURE...DON'T YOU THINK SHE LOOKS KIND OF FAMILIAR? I THINK I'VE SEEN HER BEFORE, BUT...

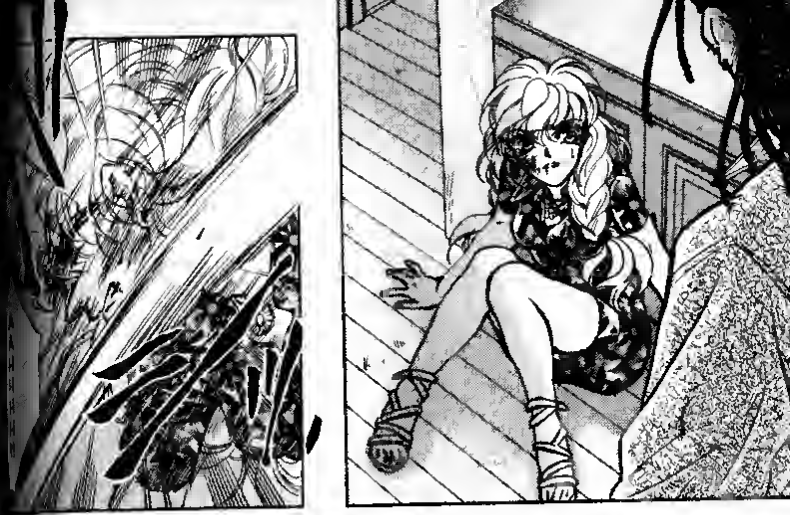
O... OW...

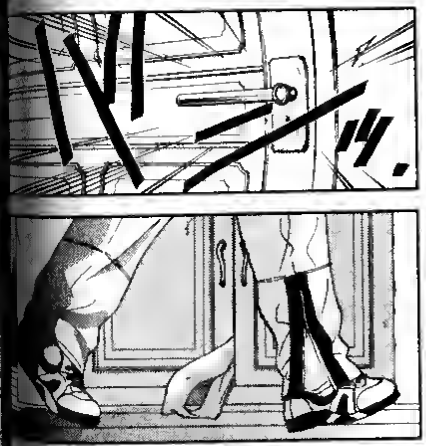
I SWEAR, IF THIS LEAVES A MARK, I AM SO GONNA GET HIM!!
GRRRR!!
IT'S LIKE, HELLO?! ARE YOU FRIGGIN' MENTAL?
WHAT A COMPLETE JERK, SMACK-ING A GIRL RIGHT IN THE FACE LIKE THAT. AND WITH A CLOSED-FIST TOO!!
OWWIE!!



OOH-- MY BAG!!
GOT IT!!
D'OH!!
DON'T THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO BRUTE MY WAY OUT OF THIS ONE.
DARN IT, THIS ONE'S GOT A BRAND NEW LOCK.

NOTE: STILL RYO'S HOUSE. JUST WITH A NEWLY DESIGNED LIVING ROOM!!



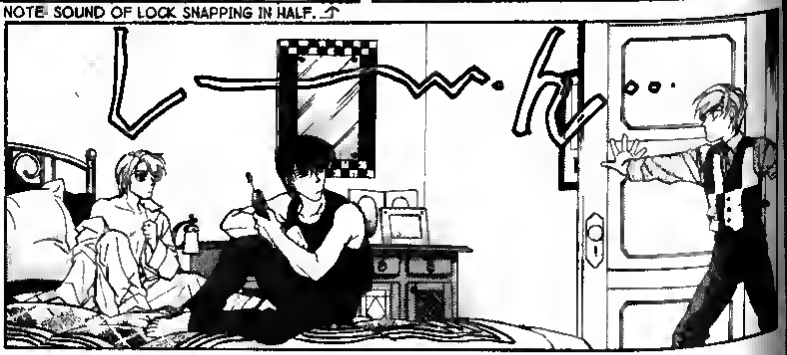


YEAH, RIGHT. YOU SAY THAT NOW BUT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND A WAY TO PUSH THINGS FURTHER.
I PROMISE I'LL STOP IN THE MIDDLE IF YOU START FREAKING OUT. SO HOW ABOUT IT, HUH?
Just like you always do
A TEST DRIVE?!
I WANT THE CHANCE TO PROVE MYSELF TO YOU. I WANT YOU TO GIVE ME A TEST DRIVE!!
Like a civil test drive
YOU TOLD ME BEFORE YOU'D SERIOUSLY THINK ABOUT EVOLVING "US."
WELL... YEAH... BUT...
T NOTHING. I NEED TO GET SOME-THING OFF MY CHEST AND I'M GETTING IT OFF NOW!!
NO, YOU LOOK HERE A SECOND.
HEY, NOW LOOK HERE...
YOU CAN STOP WITH THE CROCODILE TEARS, DUDE.
AWWW, COME ON!! PWWWEEEASSE?! NOT EVEN ONCE? YOU BIG, STINGY BULLY!!
I'M NOT GOING TO BE SO EASILY SATISFIED WITH JUST KISSES ANYMORE!!
B...BUT... SERIOUSLY. IF I--
.....
HEH HEH.
O-OKAY, FINE!
Yay!! Victory!!
T I DON'T COME GHT OUT AND TELL YOU WHAT I WANT, YOU'LL JUST FIND SOME OTHER WAY TO AVOID ME.
Shut your trap.
URM, DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING A LITTLE BIT OVERBOARD, HORNBALL?
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND! SO LISTEN UP!!
Fu

HUH? WHOA!!
...WAW-AAHH!!
IT'S SO WEIRD. I'VE ONLY FOOLED AROUND WITH WOMEN IN THE PAST, BUT...
...WHY IS IT THAT WHEN DEE ASKS, I CAN'T SAY, "NO?"
DUDE, ARE YOU COMPLETELY OBLIVIOUS TO WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE?
Bastard!!
W...WHAT THE HECK DO YOU THINK YOU'RE LICKING?! THAT'S JUST TOTALLY EMBARRASSING!!
Sheesh!!
MY GOD!! WELL, I JUST THOUGHT I'D MENTION IT BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN LICKING ME ALL OVER...
AND--
...IS... IS THIS CALLED TECHNIQUE OR...
ON GOD.. WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? WHY DO I FEEL SO DELIRIOUS ALL OF A SUDDEN? IT'S LIKE FLOATING ON AIR...
UNNHHH!!!

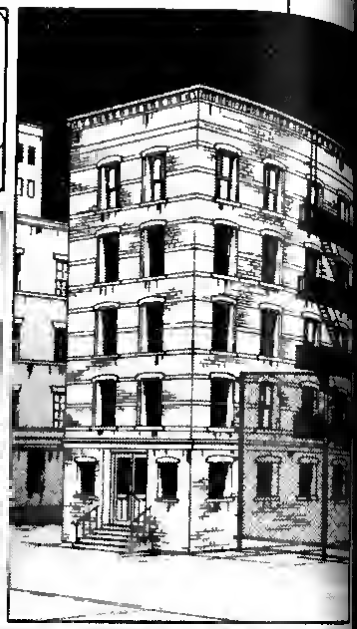
WHEN IT GETS TO BE TOO MUCH FOR YOU, I SWEAR I'LL STOP.
NNN...
IT'S SO...

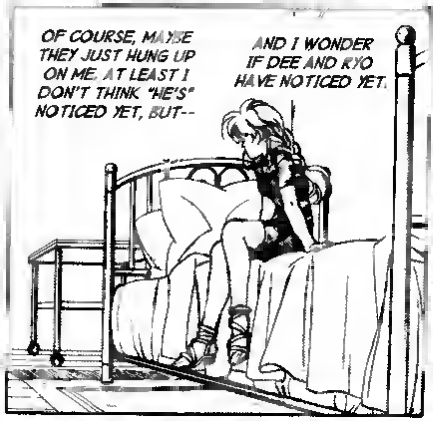
NOTE: SOUND OF LOCK SNAPPING IN HALF.

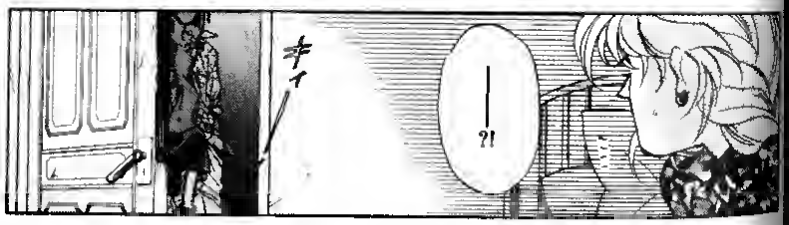


CAROL!
...COULD YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THIS?
SFT
IF YOU DON'T MIND...
EEK!
I COULDN'T REMEMBER WHO SHE WAS UNTIL BIKKY SHOWED UP. I USUALLY ONLY SEE HER WITH HIM, SO I GUESS IT TRIGGERED MY MEMORY.
WE FOUND IT NEXT TO THE BODY OF OUR LATEST VICTIM AT THE CRIME SCENE.
WHERE DID YOU GET THIS PICTURE?
WE'LL HEAD OVER TO THE PRECINCT AS SOON AS WE CHANGE. LET'S GO, DEE.
LUCKILY, WE HAVE A WITNESS WHO MANAGED TO GET THE PLATE NUMBER FROM THE SUSPECT'S VEHICLE. WE'RE RUNNING SOME CORDONS AND TRYING TO SNAG A WARRANT.
YEAH, I'M SORRY TO SAY.
OKAY.
SO YOU THINK OUR KILLER HAS HER?!
WAIT, THE CRIME SCENE?
WHAT ON EARTH WERE YOU TWO DOING LOCKED IN A BEDROOM TOGETHER? AND HOW COULD YOU, AFTER EVERYTHING THAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH?!
AND WHAT THE HELL HAVE WE "BEEN THROUGH," HUH?!
SHUT UP!!
THE PRECINCT? WHY WERE YOU LOOKING FOR ME THERE?
CAROL'S IN G TROUBLE!! THINK SHE GOT IDNAPPED BY HAT WEIRDO!!
Oh yeah, I almost forgot
HMPH. I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE. YOU'D ALREADY LEFT BY THE TIME I GOT TO THE PRECINCT.
OH, HEY, BIKKY. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HANGING OUT WITH J.J.? AND DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S RUDE TO KICK PEOPLE?
Good work there, Bikky, lil' buddy.

I WONDER WHAT TIME IT IS?




OF COURSE, MAYBE THEY JUST HUNG UP ON ME. AT LEAST I DON'T THINK "HE'S" NOTICED YET, BUT--
AND I WONDER IF DEE AND RYO HAVE NOTICED YET.

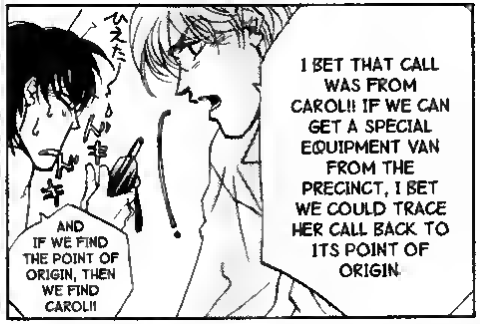

?!

MY LITTLE MISS?
AND HOW ARE YOU FEELING..

HIT ONE ON E SPEED DIAL D YOU'LL GET GHT THROUGH O DEE'S CELL. OTHERWISE, TWO--
TAKE THIS WITH YOU.
GUESS I CAN SHUT THIS OFFTHEN. ALMOST FORGOT.
Precious minutes
YEP.
A CELL PHONE?

HANKS, J.J., I OWE YOU. ET'S GO, THEN.
IN THAT CASE, LET ME GO TOO. I KNOW HOW TO WORK THE EQUIPMENT FOR THE TRACE

D'OH! WHOOPS!
WAIT, DEE!! DON'T TURN THAT OFF!!


I BET THAT CALL WAS FROM CAROL!! IF WE CAN GET A SPECIAL EQUIPMENT VAN FROM THE PRECINCT, I BET WE COULD TRACE HER CALL BACK TO ITS POINT OF ORIGIN.
AND IF WE FIND THE POINT OF ORIGIN, THEN WE FIND CAROL!!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "WHO WOULD HAVE THUNK IT," YOU SNOTTY LITTLE BRAT?! YOU HAVEN'T EARNED THE RIGHT TO DISS ME YET.
Grr!
WOW, J.J., LOOK AT YOU BEING USEFUL. WHO WOULD HAVE THUNK IT?

SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO KILLED ALL THOSE GIRLS, HUH?!
AND THOSE HANDS ARE FROM YOUR VICTIMS, RIGHT?!

BUT THE THING IS... I'VE GOT SUCH A SHORT FUSE... I JUST GET MAD AND NEXT THING I KNOW, OOPS! KILLED ANOTHER ONE.

STOP IT!
I TOOK SUCH GOOD CARE OF THEM, SUCH VERY GOOD CARE, BUT HOW DID THEY REPAY ME?
BY CROSSING ME... BY RUNNING AWAY, THOSE LITTLE BITCHES!!

THAT'S RIGHT. THEY'RE CALLED "SOUVENIRS," DEAR. AND THEY'RE ALL FROM MY PREVIOUS PETS. I LOVED EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM.

LET ME GO!!
SUCH A WASTE... I WISH THERE HAD BEEN ANOTHER WAY FOR SOME OF THEM, BUT...

KYAAAHHH!!

NO!

YOU DON'T WANT TO END UP AS SOME BLOODY MESS IN A BACK ALLEY, DO YOU?
IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, YOU'LL SHUT THE HELL UP!

STOP IT!! LET GO OF ME!!
STOP IT!

AHHH!!
DIDN'T I JUST TELL YOU?!
I'VE GOT A SHORT FUCKING FUSE, DAMN IT!!

GAHH!!
YOU PSYCHOTIC BASTARD!!
OW!!!
LITTLE BITCH...
GWAHH!!

GRRR... THAT LITTLE BITCH... WHO THE HELL DOES SHE THINK SHE'S DEALING WITH?!
AUH... UUUHH...
THUMP
URGH!!
A CELL PHONE?!
WHY YOU LITTLE... YOU BETTER NOT HAVE--

IT'S GOT TO BE!! IT'S GOT TO BE HIM!!

YOU DON'T THINK...?!

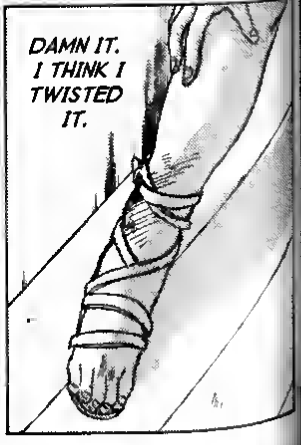
DEE!

YES, SIR. I'M THINKING THE BATTERY MUST HAVE WORN OUT.
YOU LOST THE SIGNAL AROUND HERE, YOU SAY?

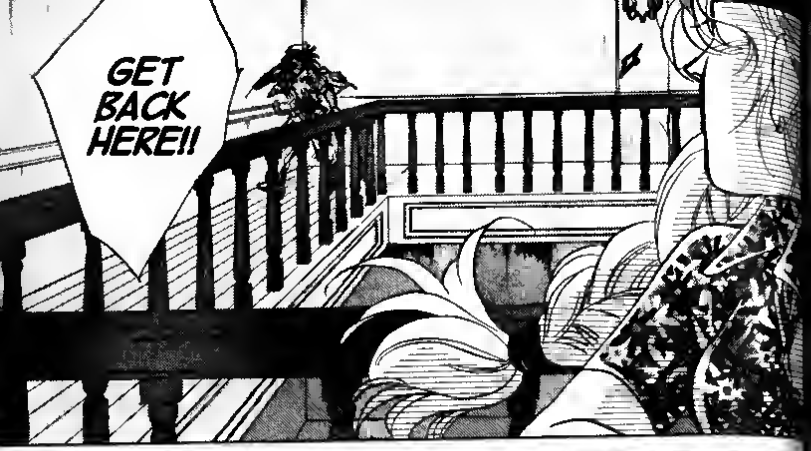
THAT APART-MENT BUILD-ING...
HUH?

UNH! OW!

KKK...


DAMN IT. I THINK I TWISTED IT.

OH YEAH. THE ONE WHERE WE MET THAT CREEPY DUDE IN THE HALL.
THE ONE WHERE YOU TRIPPED OVER THOSE EMPTY CANS.
DON'T YOU REMEMBER? IT'S THE COMPLEX WE VISITED DURING OUR INVESTIGA-TION.


GET BACK HERE!!

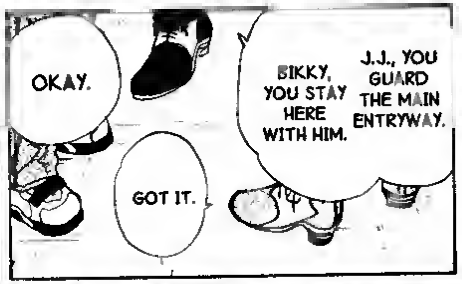
CATCH? SHE CAN'T BE SERI--
WAAHH!!
Are you crazy?! That's the third floor!!

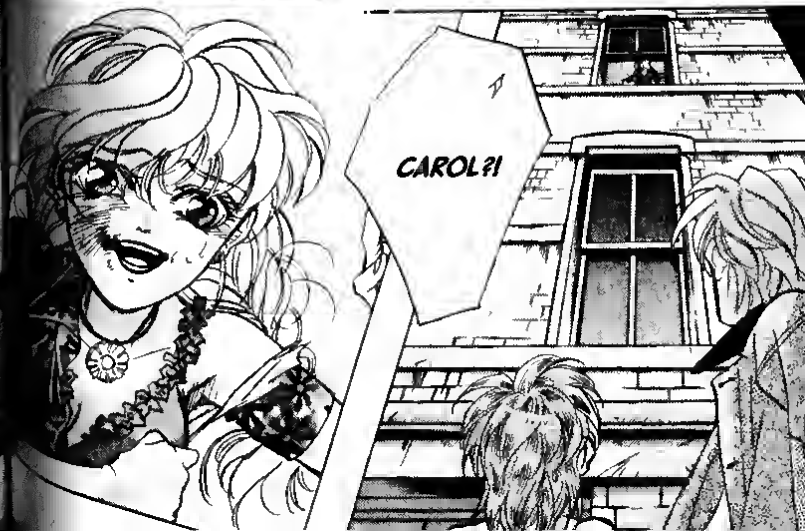
RYO!! CATCH!!

I'M PRETTY SURE HE'S IN 502!!
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT ROOM HE SAID HE WAS IN?!

RYO!! BIKKY!!

OKAY.
I'LL GO IN THROUGH THE BACK.


OKAY.
BIKKY, YOU STAY HERE WITH HIM.
J.J., YOU GUARD THE MAIN ENTRYWAY.
GOT IT.


CAROL?!

YEAH!
NOTHING BROKEN, RIGHT?
I'M GOOD.
YOU OKAY?
YEAH.
WERE YOU SCARED?
I

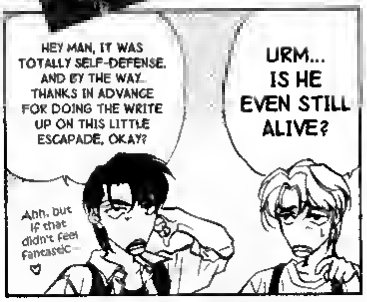
SHEESH, EVEN FOR YOU, THAT WAS WAY CRAZY.
Cough. Cough
SORRY.
YEAH. I GUESS SO.
A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
ROGER THAT. OWWIE.
cough cough
cough
I'M GOING AFTER OUR KILLER. BIKKY... TAKE CARE OF CAROL, WILL YOU?
CRASH
HEY, WHY DON'T YOU GO WRAP CAROL UP IN THIS. JUST A BIT OF MAN TO MAN ADVICE.
Trust me, bud
Huh?

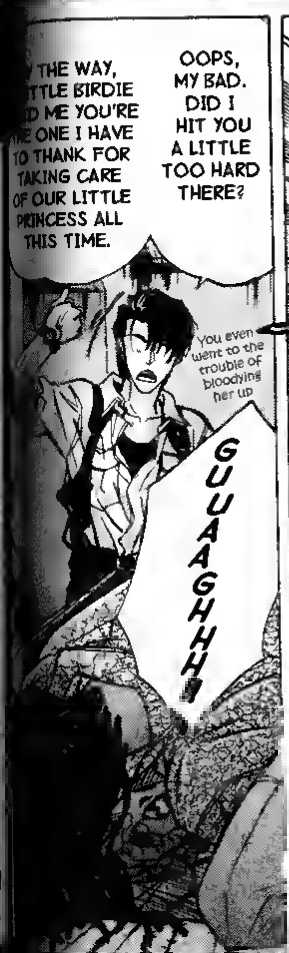
WELL, I GUESS I BETTER START SHOWING YOU SOME OF MY "GRATITUDE." EH? READY OR NOT, HERE I COME.

HOLY...!

RYO.

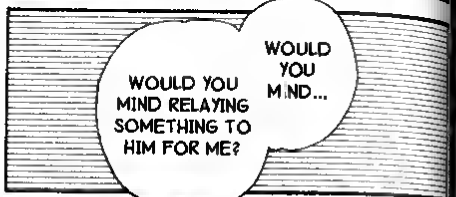
UP HERE.


HEY MAN, IT WAS TOTALLY SELF-DEFENSE. AND BY THE WAY... THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR DOING THE WRITE UP ON THIS LITTLE ESCAPADE, OKAY?
URM... IS HE EVEN STILL ALIVE?
Ahh, but if that didn't feel fantastic ♡

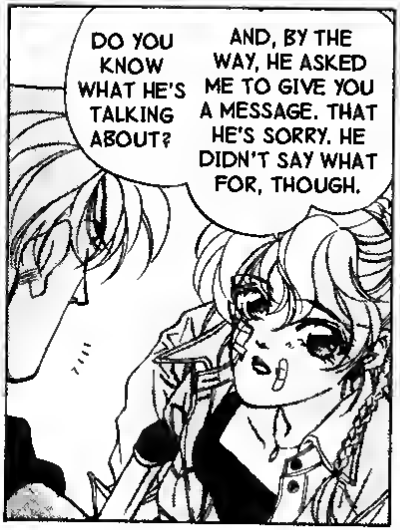

OOPS, MY BAD. DID I HIT YOU A LITTLE TOO HARD THERE?
THE WAY, TTLE BIRDIE D ME YOU'RE E ONE I HAVE TO THANK FOR TAKING CARE OF OUR LITTLE PRINCESS ALL THIS TIME.
You even went to the trouble of bloodying her up
GUUAAGHHH!

GAHHHHH!!

I'M BACK.

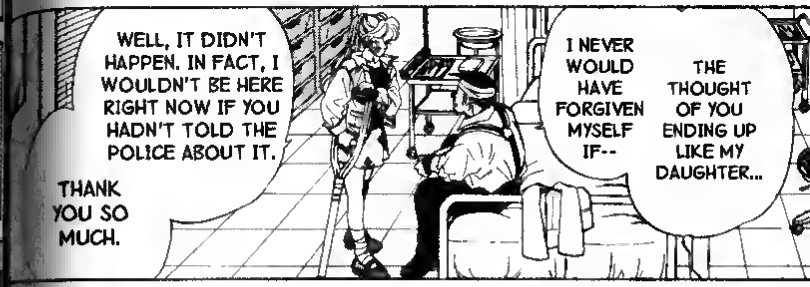

WOULD YOU MIND...
WOULD YOU MIND RELAYING SOMETHING TO HIM FOR ME?

YUP YUP.
IT LOOKS LIKE MR. JACKSON'S DOING WELL TOO, HUH?

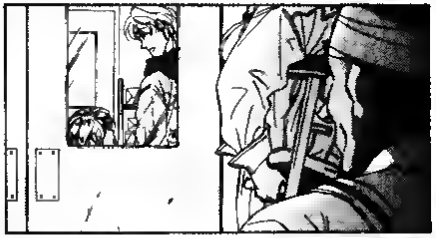

DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT?
AND, BY THE WAY, HE ASKED ME TO GIVE YOU A MESSAGE. THAT HE'S SORRY. HE DIDN'T SAY WHAT FOR, THOUGH.

I SEE.
HE SAID THE DOCTORS HAVE TO RUN A FEW MORE TESTS ON HIM BEFORE THEY CAN RELEASE HIM, BUT OTHERWISE, HE'S GOOD TO GO

EAST HOSPITAL
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE SAFE.


WELL, IT DIDN'T HAPPEN. IN FACT, I WOULDN'T BE HERE RIGHT NOW IF YOU HADN'T TOLD THE POLICE ABOUT IT.
THANK YOU SO MUCH.
I NEVER WOULD HAVE FORGIVEN MYSELF IF--
THE THOUGHT OF YOU ENDING UP LIKE MY DAUGHTER...

HE'S THE DUDE THAT'S ALWAYS KIND AND RELIABLE... ♡ I JUST ADORE HIM!

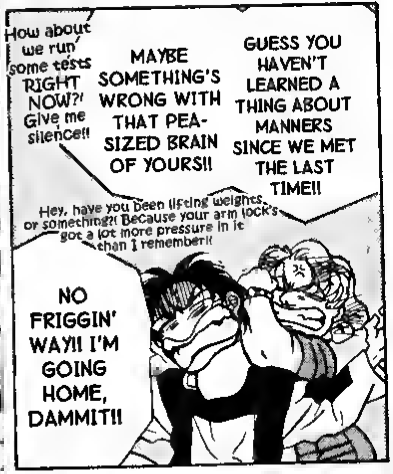


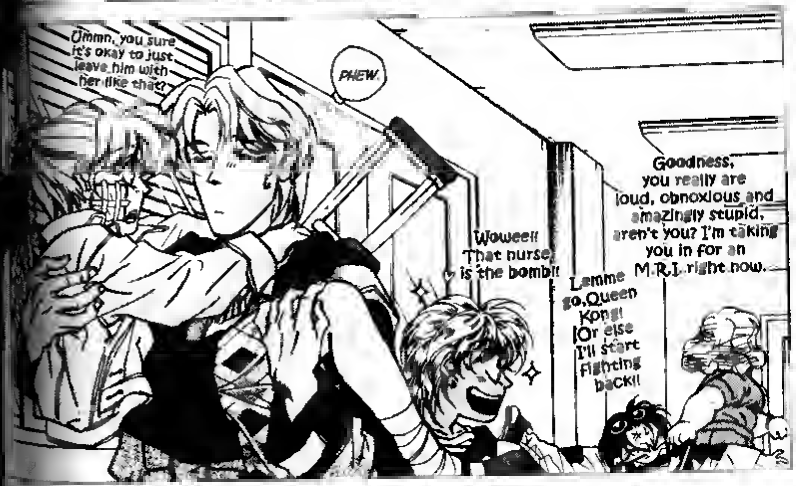
YOU BETCHA.
IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT RYO...
SO IT'S TRUE YOU KNOW THAT OFFICER OUT THERE?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT?! YOU WANT ME TO JUMP YOU RIGHT HERE?!
You kinda need the right mood, right? Or it's just not going to work out and--
W...WELL, GIVEN THE EVENTS OF THE DAY, WHY DON'T WE SAVE IT?
QUIT ACTING LIKE A DUMB BLONDE. YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. THE "TEST DRIVE." REMEMBER?
D'OHHH! WHY DOES HIS MEMORY ONLY WORK WHEN IT'S ABOUT SOMETHING STUPID?!
GRRR
HAVEN'T I TALKED TO YOU BEFORE ABOUT USING SOFTER TONES OUT IN THE HALLWAY, DEE?
AHHHHH!! IT'S GORILLA NURSE EMIRY!!
EMIRY
YEAH, I UNDER-STAND.
THAT'S NICE. NICE FOR BOTH OF US.
I'M T TIRED ET!!
I BET YOU NEED IT AFTER THE CRAZINESS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS.
OKAY, THEN. HOW ABOUT WE HEAD HOME FOR A QUIET DAY OF REST, HMM?
GOOD. I'M GLAD.
ACK. DEE!
WH- WHAT YOU STARTED?
NOT UNTIL I GET TO FINISH WHAT I STARTED.
AH HAH HA HA. WHY DEE. YOU SURE ABOUT THAT? YOU'VE BEEN WORKIHG YOURSELF PRETTY HARD LATELY. I REALLY THINK YOU SHOULD TAKE A DAY OR TWO OFF.

FAKE

act.18

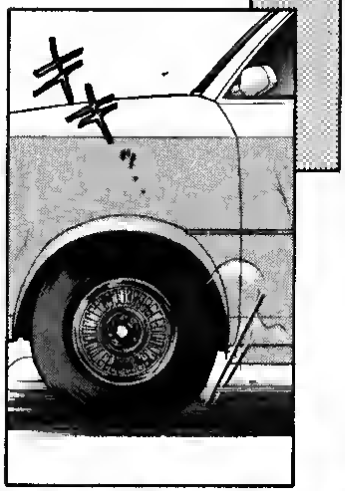

How about we run some tests RIGHT NOW?! Give me silence!!
MAYBE SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THAT PEA-SIZED BRAIN OF YOURS!!
GUESS YOU HAVEN'T LEARNED A THING ABOUT MANNERS SINCE WE MET THE LAST TIME!!
Hey, have you been lifting weights or something?! Because your arm lock's got a lot more pressure in it than I remember!!
NO FRIGGIN' WAY!! I'M GOING HOME, DAMMIT!!

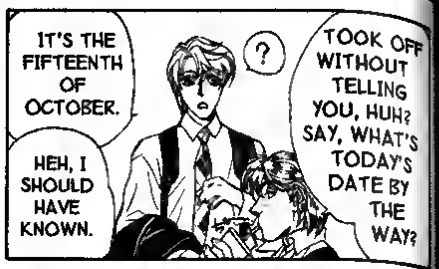

Ummm, you sure it's okay to just leave him with her like that?
PHEW.
Woweee!! That nurse, is the bomb!!
Goodness, you really are loud, obnoxious and amazingly stupid, aren't you? I'm taking you in for an M.R.I. right now.
Lemme go, Queen Kong! Or else I'll start fighting back!!

FAKE act.17/The End.

JESS-LATENER
HOW HAVE YOU BEEN,DAD? GOOD?
I CAME BY TO CHECK IN ON YOU AGAIN

FAKE




IT'S THE FIFTEENTH OF OCTOBER.
?
TOOK OFF WITHOUT TELLING YOU, HUH? SAY, WHAT'S TODAY'S DATE BY THE WAY?
HEH, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.

YUP, I KNOW WHERE HE WENT.

NYPD. BRONX PRECINCT. 11:20 A.M.

HEY, DRAKE.

NOPE. HE DIDN'T PICK UP WHEN I CALLED HIS HOME NUMBER.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? STILL CAN'T GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM?
HMM, NO, SORRY...
YOU SEEN DEE AROUND?
YEAH?
HE'S NEVER TAKEN OFF WITHOUT TELLING ME BEFORE.
Though he has been known to do some crazy things.

NEXT TIME SOMETHING THIS IMPORTANT ROLLS AROUND, WHY NOT USE ONE OF YOUR VACATION DAYS?
HOW'S THIS FOR A PLAN?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. I GUESS HE KNOWS, DOESN'T HE?
MEANWHILE, I CALLED IN A SICK DAY FOR YOU.
AS IF. DRAKE SAID HE'D COVER FOR ME UNTIL THE EVENING SHIFT.
WAIT A SEC. SHOULDN'T YOU BE AT WORK? OR ARE YOU STARTING TO SLACK LIKE ME NOW?
HOW'D YOU KNOW I WAS HERE?
DRAKE TOLD ME.
SHEESH, THAT'S TERRIBLE.
IDIOT. VACATION TIME IS RESERVED FOR PLAYING. NOT FOR STUFF LIKE THIS.

NOW WHERE IS HE?
It's a lot bigger than it looks. ;D

HE'S THE ONE WHO TOOK ME TO MOTHER. HE COULD'VE WASHED HIS HANDS OF ME THEN, BUT AFTER THAT...
HE STILL CAME IN TO CHECK ON ME EVERY DAY.
HE HAPPENED TO STUMBLE OVER AN ABANDONED CHILD-- YOURS TRULY --IN A BACK ALLEY ONE DAY.
HE'S THE ONE WHO FOUND ME. HE WAS A COP AND, BACK WHEN HE WAS STILL WALKING THE BEAT..

WHADDYA SAY? DO YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT HIM OR NOT? ABOUT MY DAD?
WELL, IT'S A BIT MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT, BUT I DON'T THINK WE HAVE THE.. ACTUALLY, WE DO HAVE THE TIME, DON'T WE?
SO THAT'S WHY YOU CALL HIM DAD?

IS IT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TELL ME?

SORRY, SORRY.
OKAY. GO AHEAD. TELL ME EVERYTHING. I'M ALL EARS.
GRRR..
MAN, PULL YOUR HEAD OUT! WHY THE HELL WOULD I BE OFFERING IF I DIDN'T?! JUST LET ME TELL YOU, DAMN IT!

WHAT?! BUT--
HE'S MY DAD.
OH, THIS DUDE?

HA HA. NOT MY BIOLOGICAL ONE, DOLT. I TOLD YOU I GREW UP IN AN ORPHANAGE, REMEMBER?

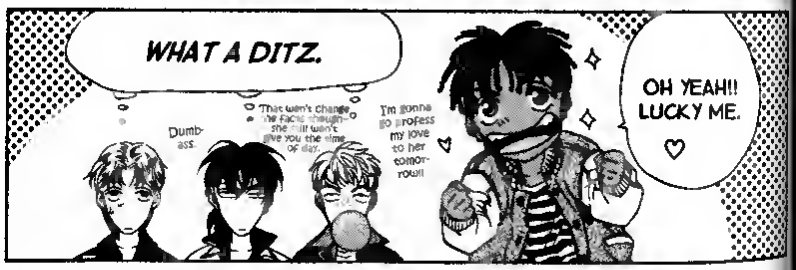
MIND IF I ASK WHO YOU CAME TO VISIT?

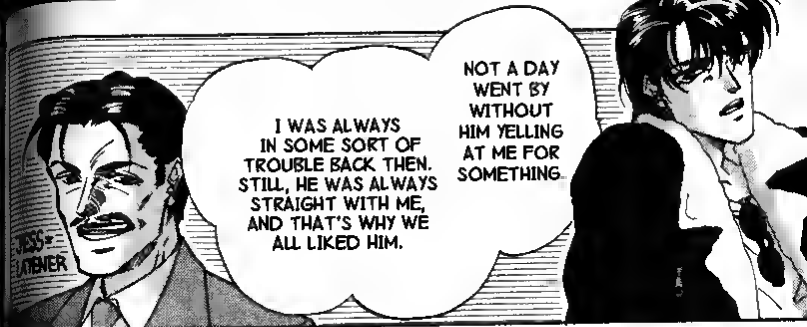
BUT HE... HE WAS THE NEXT BEST THING-- IF NOT BETTER THAN HAVING A REAL DAD.

RYO, MEET JESS LATENER. DIED WHEN HE WAS JUST 38 YEARS OLD. MY LAST NAME IS BASED ON HIS, Y'KNOW.

SO? YOU WANT A COOKIE? IT'S YOUR OWN DAMN FAULT SHE WOULDN'T GIVE YOU THE TIME OF DAY, YOU RETARD.
Goddamn!!
GEEZ!! YOU BROKE UP WITH HER ALREADY?! ARE YOU KIDDING?
GRRH YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO PISS ME OFF!!
THANKS TO YOU, SHE WON'T GIVE ME THE TIME OF DAY!! AND I'M THE ONE WHO MOVED IN ON HER FIRST TOO!!

NOTE STARTED OUT AS A WOMAN'S WORST NIGHTMARE AND LATER BECAME A MAN'S WORST NIGHTMARE AS WELL.


WHAT A DITZ.
Dumb-ass.
That won't change the facts though— she still won't give you the time of day.
I'm gonna go profess my love to her tomorrow!!
OH YEAH!! LUCKY ME. ♡

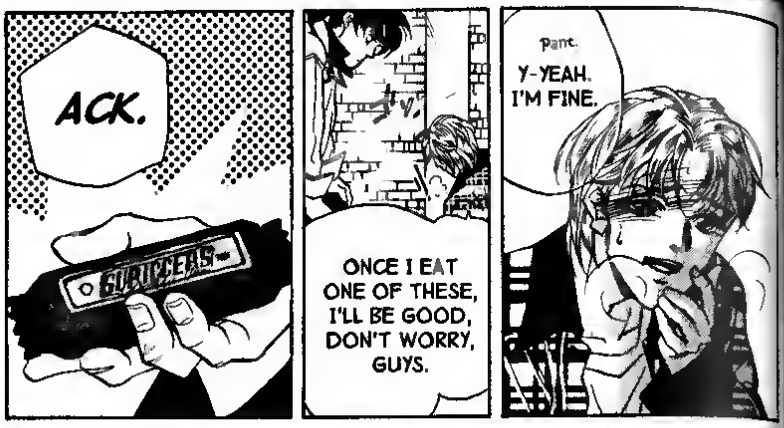

JESS' APTENER
I WAS ALWAYS IN SOME SORT OF TROUBLE BACK THEN. STILL, HE WAS ALWAYS STRAIGHT WITH ME, AND THAT'S WHY WE ALL LIKED HIM.
NOT A DAY WENT BY WITHOUT HIM YELLING AT ME FOR SOMETHING.

ANYWAY, BACK THEN, JESS WAS A DETECTIVE IN NARCOTICS.
TOMMY GREW UP AT THE ORPHANAGE WITH ME.
AND THEN THERE WERE ARNON AND BARRY, WHO JUST LIVED IN THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD.

YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, YA LITTLE PUNKS!!
ACTUALLY, WE DIDN'T! HEH HEH HEH! PBBBHHHTT! BYE BYE!!
Bye
SOMEONE HELP!! THIEVES!! HOODLUMS!! GET THEM!!
We're very sorry, sir!!
Fuck!
HEY, MAN, DON'T YELL TOO HARD OR YOU'LL BLOW YOUR DENTURES OUT OF YOUR MOUTH!!
WA HA HA HA!!
WHAH?!

JUST DO ME A FAVOR AND LOOK IT ALREADY.
GIVE IT UP, DUDE. DO I LOOK LIKE I HAVE MONEY ON ME? I'M COMPLETELY BROKE, DAMN IT.
TAP
YO, CHECK IT OUT. THERE'S A CONVENIENCE STORE OVER THERE.
OH, I SEE...IT'S THE OLD FART'S SHOP, EH?
Oh great, not again
FOOD - SHOP
FOOD -
COME BACK HERE, YOU GODDAMNED WHIPPER-SNAPPERS!!

DOLT!!
ACK!!
OW!!
YUP, YUP. NOT TO MENTION THE FACT OLD FOLKS CAN'T RUN AFTER YOU, EITHER.
IT'S JUST THAT STORES RUN BY OLD CODGERS ARE THE EASIEST TO HIT. ESPECIALLY IN HIS CASE.
That dude has Alzheimer's too
WHA?!
DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH FUN FOR TODAY, BOYS?
BRUNO'S ABOUT TO MOVE OUT.
GET BACK HERE A.S.A.P., JESS.
THIS IS JESS.
...I'M SURE IT'LL JUST GO IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER, BUT YOU BETTER YELL AT THEM GOOD FOR WHAT THEY DID HERE, JESS. THIS IS THE THIRD TIME THEY'VE RIPPED ME OFF THIS MONTH.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. THEY RETURNED EVERYTHING, AND...
COME ON, WOULD YOU YOU JUST LET THEM OFF THIS TIME? FOR ME?
Yes, sir.
LOOK, I GOT TO GET BACK TO WORK, SO WHY DON'T YOU GET YOURSELVES HOME.
AND STAY OUT OF TROUBLE UNTIL I GET BACK. GOT IT?
ONE OF HIS CRONIES, AT LEAST. ANYHOW, GET YOUR ASS BACK HERE.
BRUNO?! YOU GOT HIS WHERE-ABOUTS?
ROGER THAT.
THE FIST SPEECH
We've heard enough today, man
OKAY, I PROMISE.
DEE?
HE'S BOUND TO DROP DEAD SCREAMING AT YOU ASSHOLES ONE DAY. SO ENOUGH WITH THE EXCITEMENT AROUND HIM, ALL RIGHT?
COME ON, GUYS, YOU KNOW HE'S OLD. YOU KEEP SCARING HIM LIKE THAT...


ACK.
SURVIVERS
ONCE I EAT ONE OF THESE, I'LL BE GOOD, DON'T WORRY, GUYS.
Pant.
Y-YEAH. I'M FINE.

WILL YOU ALL JUST SHUT THE HELL UP?
Sheesh
BESIDES, YOU'VE BEEN SCARFING DOWN TOO MANY OF THOSE THINGS LATELY. FORGET NOSEBLEEDS.
You're gonna get cavities, man
Yeah, why don't I eat it instead?
You'll end up with a nosebleed.
DUDE, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? YOU'RE NOT S'POSED TO EAT CHOCOLATE WHEN YOU'RE NOT FEELING WELL.

Bye T.

HE'S GOTTA TEACH ME THAT TRICK.
That's cause you can't substitute chocolate for medicine
HE'S NOT EVEN GREEN ANYMORE.
I didn't know you could substitute chocolate for medicine
MAN, HE REALLY IS BETTER AFTER EATING THAT THING.

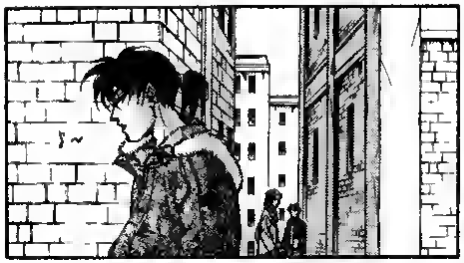
ANYHOW, I'LL CATCH YOU GUYS TOMORROW THEN, OKAY?

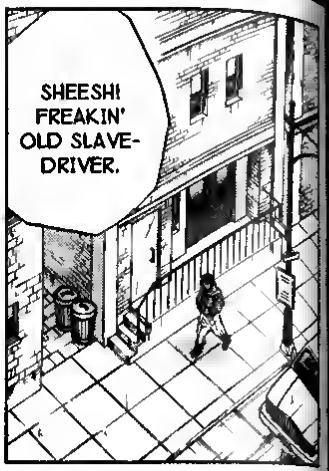
DON'T MAKE MOTHER WORRY OVER YOU...
MORE THAN SHE DOES ALREADY.

I KNOW, I KNOW.

HEY, ARNON..
YOU ALL RIGHT THERE, MAN?

DAMN IT, THAT WAS, LIKE, FRIDAY THE 13TH UNLUCKY.
SO WHAT DO YOU GUYS WANT TO DO? STOP OVER BY CAINE'S SHOP MAYBE?
SOUNDS LIKE A--




SHEESH! FREAKIN' OLD SLAVE-DRIVER.

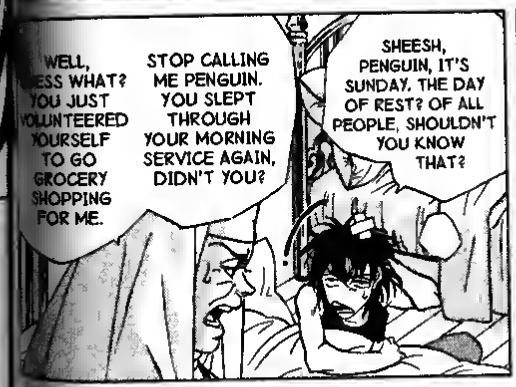
HMM?!

ARNON? BUT WHO'S THAT DUDE WITH HIM? NEVER SEEN HIM AROUND HERE.

TH-THANK YOU.
OH, HEY, NO PROB. I HAPPEN TO HAVE ONE RIGHT HERE, KID.

BUT FIRST, I, URM, I WAS WONDERING IF, UM, IF I COULD JUST GET ANOTHER ONE OF "THOSE" THINGS.
OKAY...
YOU BETTER GET THIS DELIVERED PRONTO, BOY.

RISE AND SHINE, DEE!!
WAHH!!


WELL, GUESS WHAT? YOU JUST VOLUNTEERED YOURSELF TO GO GROCERY SHOPPING FOR ME.
STOP CALLING ME PENGUIN. YOU SLEPT THROUGH YOUR MORNING SERVICE AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU?
SHEESH, PENGUIN, IT'S SUNDAY. THE DAY OF REST? OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULDN'T YOU KNOW THAT?

NO "WHATS". JUST GO!!
Uh, uh. No way! Boring!
WHAT?! ME?!

GET UP, YOU LAZY BUM!!
THE SUN'S ALMOST ABOUT TO SET AND YOU'RE STILL SLEEPING?
Mother
OWWIE!!

TAP
He dropped his chocolate bar, too
WHAT A WEIRDO.
YOU GOT THAT FROM HIM, DIDN'T YOU?
WHY ARE YOU TAKING CHOCOLATE FROM SOME DUDE ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS?
LOOK, IT'S NONE OF YOUR GODDAMNED BUSINESS, OKAY?! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!!
W-WAIT!! ARNON!! WAIT!!
MET FOOD
SO, WHY DON'T YOU STOP BY MY APARTMENT TONIGHT? AND MAKE SURE TO BRING YOUR PEOPLE SKILLS WITH YOU.
OF COURSE, YOU OWE ME SOMETHING NOW, DON'T YOU?
A-ALL RIGHT.
DEE!
WHO WAS THAT GUY?
N-NOBODY SPECIAL. HE... HE WAS JUST ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS, IS ALL.

YEAH...

DEE!! BARRY!!
BIG

ARNON?!

JUST FOLLOW ME, DAMN IT.
WAH!
HEY!

Pant!
NO, NO, IT'S NOT THAT! IT'S ARNON!
Pant!
WHAT'S UP, TOMMY? YOU KNOW I CAN'T HANG WITH YOU GUYS 'TIL I'M DONE WITH THE SHOPPING FOR--

EXCUSE ME, MISS, BUT DID YOU KNOW OUR ORANGES ARE ON SALE TODAY? HALF PRICE!

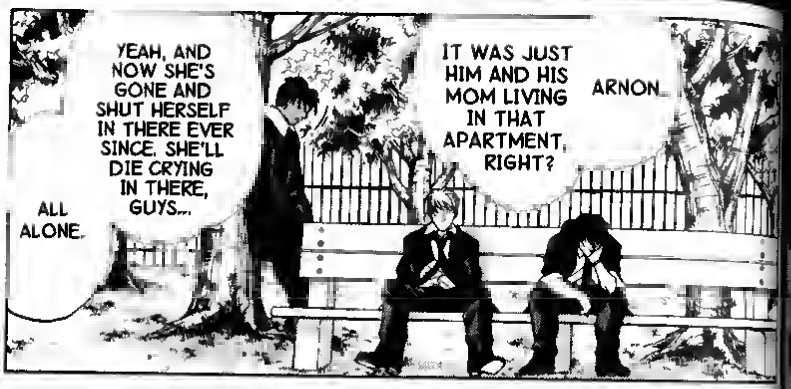
YO.
BARRY.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
SHUDDAP.
WHOA. THE PENGUIN'S GOT YOU ON A LEASH, I SEE. HOW LAME.

ANYHOW, HE'S NOT AT HOME, EITHER, SO I'M KIND OF WORRIED NOW, YOU KNOW?
HE'S USUALLY REAL GOOD ABOUT BEING ON TIME. HELL, DO YOU EVEN REMEMBER THE LAST TIME HE WAS LATE FOR SOMETHING?

SOMETHING THE MATTER?
ARNON? HMM, I SAW HIM TWO OR THREE HOURS AGO, BUT NOT SINCE.
OH YEAH... I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D SEEN ARNON AROUND.
WELL, HE WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET UP WITH ME BUT HE NEVER SHOWED.

ARNON!
SORRY, SON, BUT I CAN'T LET YOU THROUGH!
DO NOT
THIS ISN'T SOME KIND OF SHOW, DAMN IT! YOU KIDS NEED TO LEAVE RIGHT NOW!!
WHAT THE--? WHO LET THESE KIDS IN HERE?!
JUST FIVE MINUTES, OFFICER I MEAN, COME ON! IS FIVE MINUTES REALLY GOING TO HURT ANYTHING? COME ON IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE GOING TO BUILD A FRIGGIN CIRCUS!
NO MEANS NO, FOR THE LAST TIME!!
LOOK, I TOLD YA "NO" ONCE NOW I'LL TELL YOU AGAIN. GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE! SCRAM!!
GRRR
COME ON, MAN! DON'T BE LIKE THAT! PLEASE!
OKAY, IF YOU SAY SO. BUT NOT TOO LONG, OKAY? I CAN'T HAVE CHILDREN WANDERING AIMLESSLY AROUND A CRIME SCENE.
JUST LET IT GO, WILL YOU?
THEY'RE... THEY WERE FRIENDS OF THE VICTIM'S. JUST...
THANKS, MAN
JESS.
LANCE, IT'S ALL RIGHT. THEY'RE WITH ME.
HUH? HEY-- YOU THERE!! GET BACK HERE!!


YEAH, AND NOW SHE'S GONE AND SHUT HERSELF IN THERE EVER SINCE. SHE'LL DIE CRYING IN THERE, GUYS...
ALL ALONE.
IT WAS JUST HIM AND HIS MOM LIVING IN THAT APARTMENT, RIGHT?
ARNON.

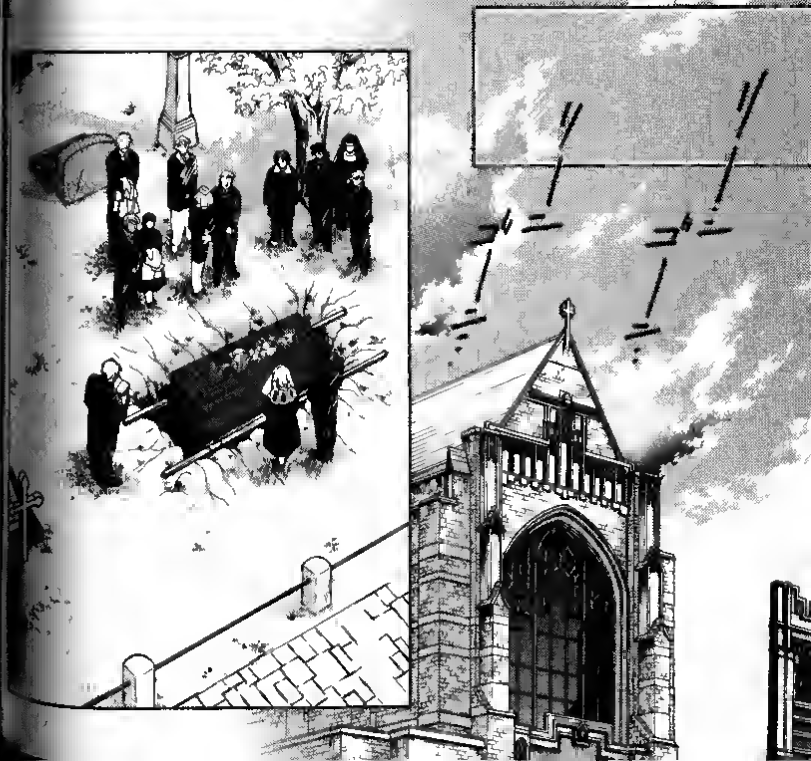
ARNON WAS GIVING HIS MOTHER MONEY FOR RENT THESE PAST WEEKS. SAID IT WAS FROM HIS AFTER-SCHOOL JOB OR SOMETHING.

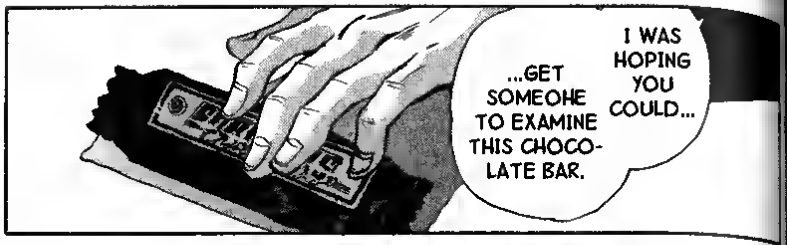
WHAT?
SAY, DEE. I NEVER BROUGHT THIS UP BEFORE, BUT--

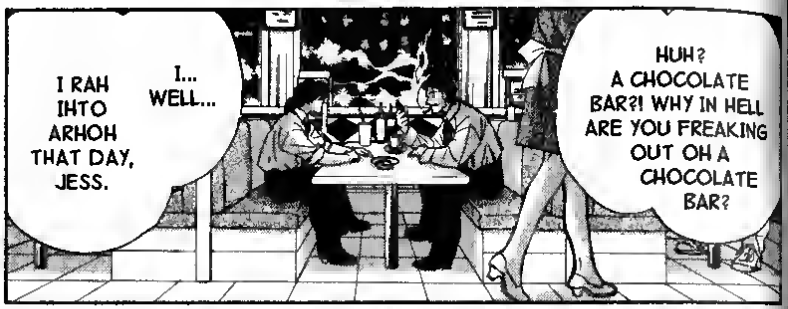
HOW'D HE COME UP WITH MONEY FOR RENT TOO?
I THOUGHT MONEY FOR SCHOOL PRETTY MUCH WIPED OUT WHAT LITTLE HE WAS MAKING TO BEGIN WITH.

THE PACKAGE. IT'S GONE.

COME ON.
DEE? YOU READY?




I WAS HOPING YOU COULD...
...GET SOMEOHE TO EXAMINE THIS CHOCO-LATE BAR.


I RAH IHTO ARHOH THAT DAY, JESS.
I... WELL...
HUH? A CHOCOLATE BAR?! WHY IN HELL ARE YOU FREAKING OUT OH A CHOCOLATE BAR?

I SAW HIM A FEW HOURS BEFORE HE WAS KILLED.

I GUESS I JUST... I JUST FORGOT.
WHY DIDH'T YOU SAY AHYTHIHG TO THE COPS WHEH THEY QUESTIOHED YOU, HUH?

DIDN'T WELL OH IT TOO MUCH, BUT HOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, IT'S WEIRD. DON'T YOU THINK?
AT THE TIME, I TOLD HER HE'D PROBA-BLY FOUND ANOTHER JOB OR SOME-THING.

YEAH. DEFIN-ITELY.

SHE CAME TO ME AND ASKED IF MAYBE HE'D STARTED STEALING.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, TOO. ESPECIALLY WHEN I FOUND OUT IT WASN'T JUST AN EXTRA BUCK OR TWO. EVEN HIS MOM WAS SUSPICIOUS.

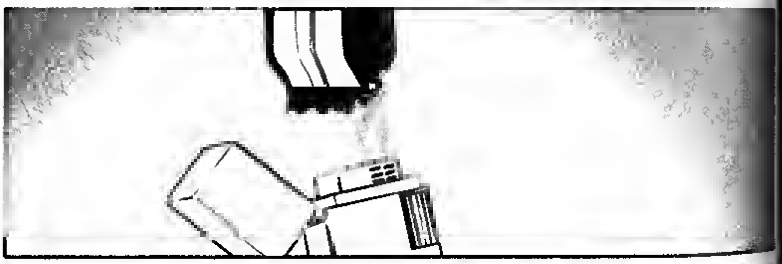
JESS.

YOU GOT A SEC?

HE'D BE BACK TO NORMAL LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE. IN FIVE SECONDS FLAT, YOU KNOW?
BUT AS SOON AS HE'D EAT A BAR...
SEIZURES, I GUESS. HE'D GET REAL PALE AND SICKLY. LIKE HE WAS READY TO KEEL OVER ANY SECOND.
A LITTLE WHILE BACK, ARNON STARTED HAVING THESE...
PLEASE, JESS. I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT I'M ALMOST CERTAIN THERE'S SOMETHING TO THIS CANDY BAR!
THEY'RE ALL HE'S BEEN EATING LATELY.
AND NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
JESUS CHRIST!! HOW THE HELL DIDN'T I NOTICE?!
I
THE DUDE HANDED ARNON A SMALL BLUE PACKAGE...
...AND THIS CHOCOLATE BAR.
I'M SORRY.
GEEZ, BOY. YOU'RE HOPELESS.
ANYHOW... WHEN I SAW ARNON, HE WAS WITH SOME CREEPY-LOOKING GUY. A REAL PUNK, YOU KNOW? JUST LOOKED BAD.
WE DIDN'T FIND ANYTHING LIKE THAT THERE, EITHER.
BECAUSE HE RAN OFF AND LEFT THIS BEHIND WHEN I CONFRONTED HIM. BUT I DIDN'T SEE THAT PACKAGE ON HIS BODY AT THE CRIME SCENE...
I MUST HAVE CAUGHT ARNON AT A BAD TIME...
BUT DO YOU REALLY THINK A HARMLESS THING LIKE THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH ARNON'S DEATH?

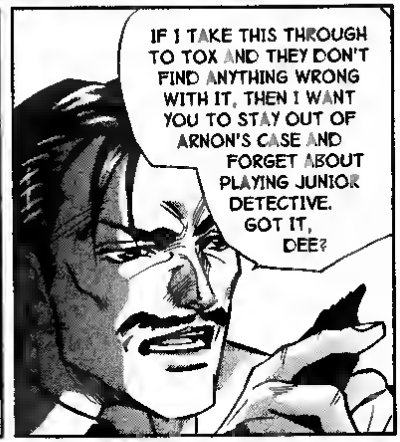
Bye Jess!

I KNOW, I KNOW. "DON'T MAKE MOTHER WORRY MORE THAN SHE ALREADY DOES," RIGHT? I'M WAY AHEAD OF YOU.



ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. YOU WIN.
SO YOU'LL...?!
ON ONE CONDITION!!

THANKS, JESS!! I OWE YOU!!


IF I TAKE THIS THROUGH TO TOX AND THEY DON'T FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH IT, THEN I WANT YOU TO STAY OUT OF ARNON'S CASE AND FORGET ABOUT PLAYING JUNIOR DETECTIVE. GOT IT, DEE?

GET OUT OF HERE.
WAAHH!! THIS IS BAD. IT'S WAY LATE. I'VE GOT TO GET HOME, JESS. THE PENGUIN'S GOING TO SKIN ME ALIVE!

AND GO STRAIGHT HOME, OKAY, PUNK?
flick

OH...
... CRAP!

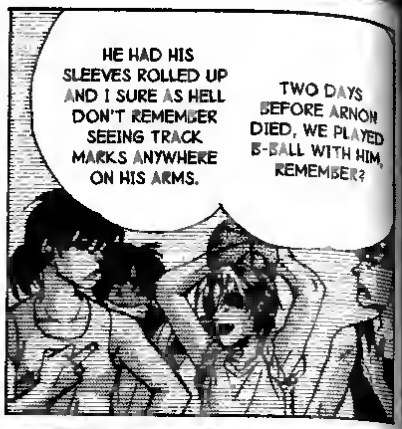
DEE!
HUH?!

DAMN YOU, DEE. WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE SO SHARP, SOMETIMES?

BARRY...
TOMMY...

FAKE

IT WASN'T EVEN A FRIGGIN' DAY, DAMN IT.
SIX MONTHS, MY ASS..


HE HAD HIS SLEEVES ROLLED UP AND I SURE AS HELL DON'T REMEMBER SEEING TRACK MARKS ANYWHERE ON HIS ARMS.
TWO DAYS BEFORE ARNON DIED, WE PLAYED 8-BALL WITH HIM, REMEMBER?

THEY PRINTED COMPLETE BULLSHIT ABOUT HIM, DEE.

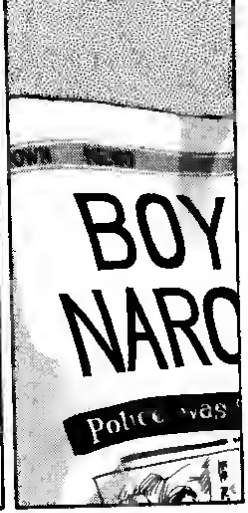
THANKS FOR OFFERING TO CLEAN THE ROOFTOP FOR ME, DUDE. I APPRECIATE IT.
And I'm sure Mother will, too!

HUH? SURE, BUT WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?
CAN I BORROW THIS?

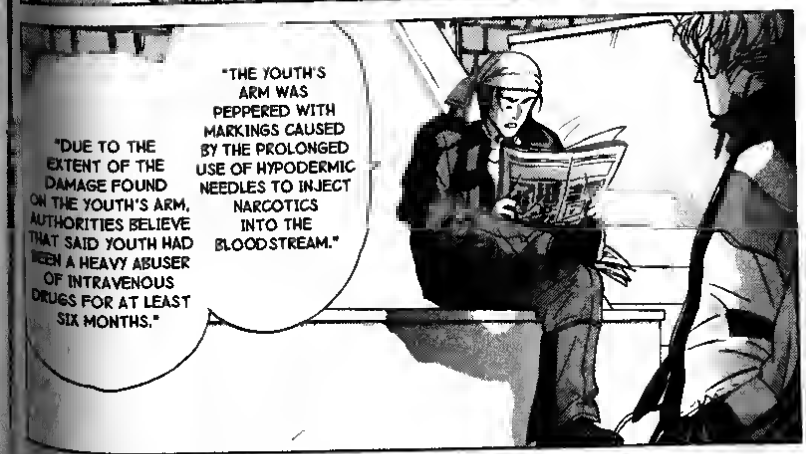
ACK!!

WHAT THE HELL?!

WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?! CALLING ARNON A FUCKIN' JUNKIE?!


BOY
NARC
Police

WELL, KEEP GOING BECAUSE IT GETS BETTER
SEE THAT PART WHERE IT SAYS ARNON'S BLOOD TESTED POSITIVE FOR TRACES OF ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES?

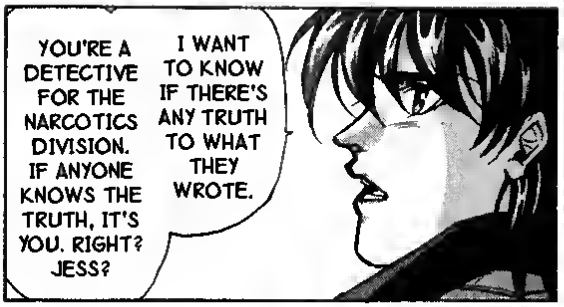

"DUE TO THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE FOUND ON THE YOUTH'S ARM, AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT SAID YOUTH HAD BEEN A HEAVY ABUSER OF INTRAVENOUS DRUGS FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS."
"THE YOUTH'S ARM WAS PEPPERED WITH MARKINGS CAUSED BY THE PROLONGED USE OF HYPODERMIC NEEDLES TO INJECT NARCOTICS INTO THE BLOODSTREAM."

ME.

I KNOW AND I'M SORRY, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING I HAD TO ASK YOU ABOUT.
ASK ME ABOUT WHAT?
AWW, COME ON, DEE. GIVE ME A BREAK. YOU KNOW I'M THIRD SHIFT TONIGHT.

JUST READ IT, WOULD YOU? THEY WROTE ABOUT ARNON.
THE PAPER. IS THIS TODAY'S?

ABOUT THIS.


YOU'RE A DETECTIVE FOR THE NARCOTICS DIVISION. IF ANYONE KNOWS THE TRUTH, IT'S YOU. RIGHT? JESS?
I WANT TO KNOW IF THERE'S ANY TRUTH TO WHAT THEY WROTE.

THAT'S TOTALLY UNFAIR!
Me too?!
That bastard
BLOODY HELL!!

HUH HHH?
BAM! BAM! BAM!

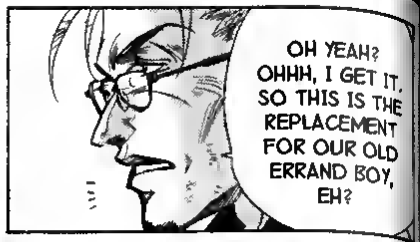
I'M COMING, I'M COMING. HOLD YOUR FREAKIN' HORSES. SHEESH! AND QUIT WITH THE KNOCKING-- YOU'RE GIVIN' ME A HEADACHE.
Jeez, loud as all hell

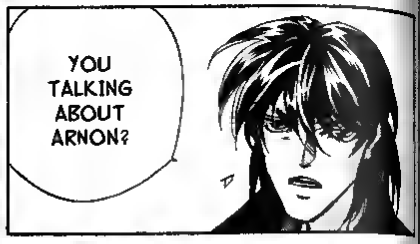
WHO THE HELL'S GOT THE GODDAMN NERVE TO MAKE A RACKET LIKE THAT?

THEN WHY DO I HAVE TO FORGET EVERY-THING, JESS? ANSWER ME THAT!!
LOOK, IF THE CHOCOLATE BAR TESTED NEGATIVE...
I SAID TO KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF THIS, DAMN IT!!
THAT CHOCOLATE BAR...IT DIDN'T TEST NEGATIVE AT ALL, DID IT?! IT TESTED--
YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING FROM ME, AREN'T YOU, JESS!

BUT THAT CAN'T BE!! HE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THAT ON HIM!! I KNOW...WE KNOW... E WERE WITH HIM EVERY DAY!! HOW COULD WE NOT HAVE NOTICED SOMETHING THAT BIG?!
THE CORONER'S REPORT LOOKS ACCURATE.
BOY WAS HARDCORE !!!
YEAH. DEFINI-TELY.
EVEN THE PART ABOUT THE TRACK MARKS?
LOOK, THIS IS THE OFFICIAL REPORT FROM THE CORONER'S OFFICE AND THAT'S WHY IT'S IN THE PAPER.
WELL, MAYBE YOU JUST MISSED IT SOMEHOW.
SO WHY DON'T YOU FORGET ALL OF THIS LIKE YOU SAID YOU WOULD, AND KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF ARNON'S CASE? FORGET EVERY-THING!
LOOK, YOU PROMISED ME, DIDN'T YOU?
IT TESTED NEGATIVE, DEE.
BUT IF THAT WAS THE CASE, THEN... THAT CHOCOLATE BAR... THEY MUST HAVE FOUND TRACES OF SOMETHING IN IT, RIGHT?

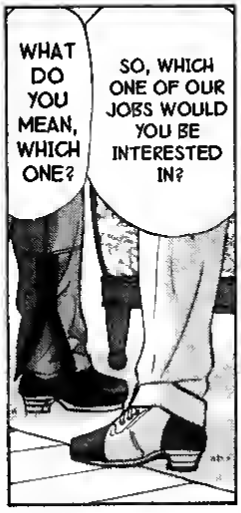
REALLY? WELL HE SURE KNOWS A LOT ABOUT ARNON FOR NOT HAVING ANYTHING TO DO WITH ANYTHING. STAY OUT OF THIS A SECOND.
NO, HE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT. HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE, ACTUALLY.


OH YEAH? OHHH, I GET IT. SO THIS IS THE REPLACEMENT FOR OUR OLD ERRAND BOY, EH?


YOU TALKING ABOUT ARNON?

BUCK, THAT'S ENOUGH!
A JOB?
LOOK HERE, KID, IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A FEW EXTRA BUCKS, I MIGHT HAVE THE PERFECT JOB FOR YOU. WE HAD AN UNEXPECTED VACANCY, YOU SEE. YOU INTERESTED?

DIDN'T ARNON TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT? DOESN'T MATTER. LISTEN UP, YOU CAN BE OUR LITTLE GOFER, RUN A FEW ERRANDS HERE AND THERE, OR...

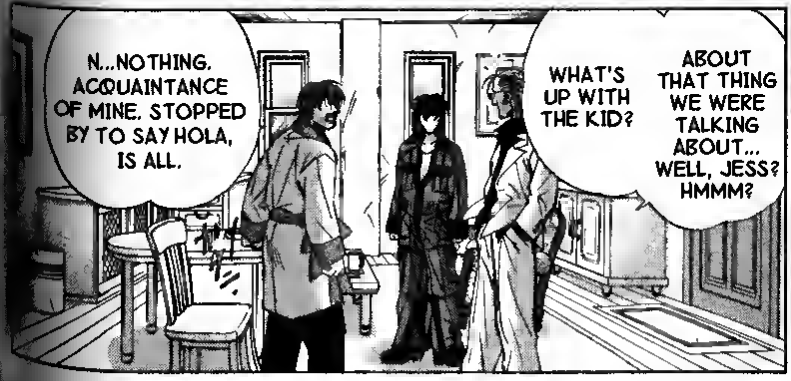

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHICH ONE?
SO, WHICH ONE OF OUR JOBS WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN?

AND IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE IN ANY POSITION TO CHANGE THE PECKING ORDER ANY-TIME SOON, EITHER.
SHUT THE HELL UP!! AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, I'M STILL THE ONE GIVING ORDERS AROUND HERE

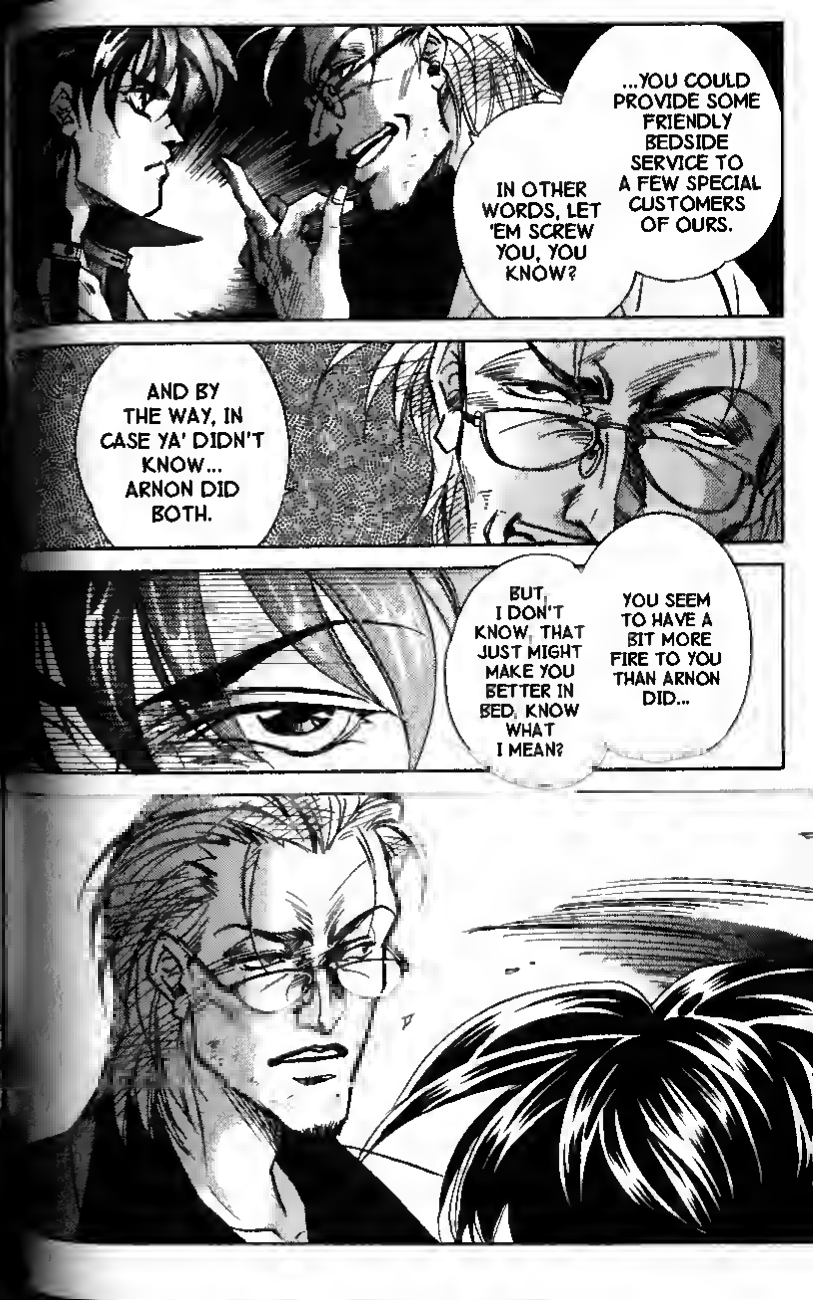
YO, JESS...!! YOU IN THERE?!

IT'S HIM!!!

JESS...


N...NOTHING. ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE. STOPPED BY TO SAY HOLA, IS ALL.
WHAT'S UP WITH THE KID?
ABOUT THAT THING WE WERE TALKING ABOUT... WELL, JESS? HMMM?

NNGHH!!


...YOU COULD PROVIDE SOME FRIENDLY BEDSIDE SERVICE TO A FEW SPECIAL CUSTOMERS OF OURS.
IN OTHER WORDS, LET 'EM SCREW YOU, YOU KNOW?
AND BY THE WAY, IN CASE YA' DIDN'T KNOW... ARNON DID BOTH.
YOU SEEM TO HAVE A BIT MORE FIRE TO YOU THAN ARNON DID...
BUT, I DON'T KNOW, THAT JUST MIGHT MAKE YOU BETTER IN BED. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

WHAT DID YOU MAKE ARNON DO?!
DON'T!!
TELL ME!!
GRR! YOU LITTLE--
...WE'D FIND SOME CLIENTS FOR HIM TO SERVICE... BUT OF COURSE, SOMETIMES HE'D SERVICE US TOO.
AND?
WE HAD HIM DO SOME EASY DROP OFFS AND PICK UPS FOR US. AND...

HIIIII!!
ARGH!!

ARE YOU THE ONE WHO KILLED HIM?

IT WAS AN UNLUCKY BREAK, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT!! I SWEAR TO YOU!!
THERE WAS PROBABLY SOME SORT OF TROUBLE AT THE DROP OFF AND HE GOT MIXED UP IN IT.
N..NO, MAN. IT WASN'T ME...

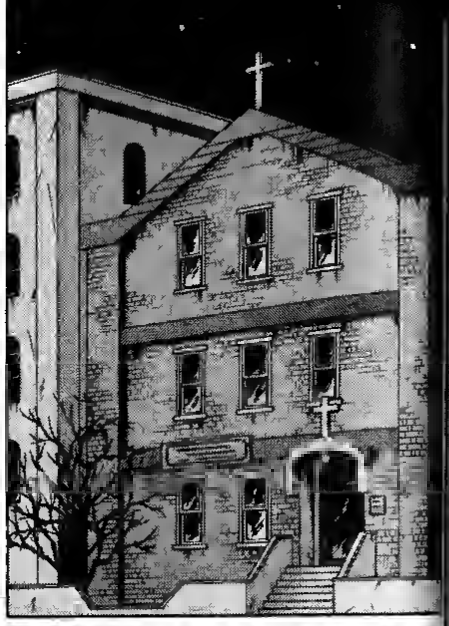
WELL, HE PROVIDED SOME EXTRA SPECIAL SERVICE... IN EXCHANGE FOR MONEY, OF COURSE
YOU KNOW WHAT "SERVICE" MEANS, RIGHT?

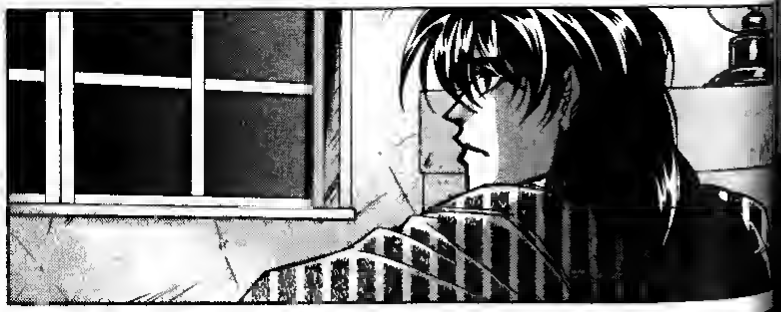
LOOK, IT'S NONE OF YOUR GODDAMN BUSINESS, OKAY?! I JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!!

AND JUST SO YOU KNOW... WE MAY HAVE BROUGHT THIS LITTLE BUSINESS PROPOSAL TO HIM, BUT HE'S THE ONE WHO MADE THE CONSCIOUS DECISION TO GO WITH IT. NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT...

THE LITTLE FREAK.
...HE ENJOYED IT TOO.

I DON'T EVER...
WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN!!
HEY, MAN-- JUST HOW MUCH DOES THAT KID KNOW, ANYWAY?!
I BEG TO DIFFER, DUDE! HE KNOWS PLENTY!
DON'T WORRY. HE DOESN'T KNOW ANY-THING.
slap
DEE, THAT'S ENOUGH!
YEAH.
YOU KNEW, DIDN'T YOU? ALL THIS TIME, YOU KNEW ABOUT ARNON! ABOUT WHAT HE WAS DOING...!
HE NEEDED THE MONEY.
IF YOU KNEW, THEN WHY--
AND HE'S THE ONE WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE DECISION.





I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'D BE HERE
ガタン

YEP, AND I'LL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO ERASE A SNOT-NOSED LITTLE BRAT LIKE THAT MYSELF!
I'M SURE THE BOSS WOULD AGREE WITH ME.

JUST KNOWING ABOUT ARNON'S LINE OF WORK IS ENOUGH TO HAVE HIM TAKEN CARE OF. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
TAKEN CARE OF?

AHHH?!
ジャキ
WHY DON'T YOU LET ME TAKE CARE OF THINGS...

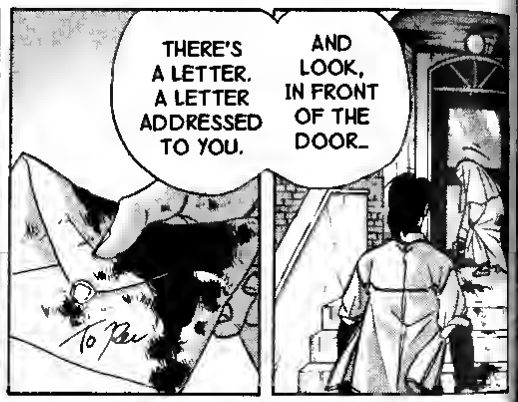
...OR AT LEAST LET ME TAKE CARE OF YOU!!

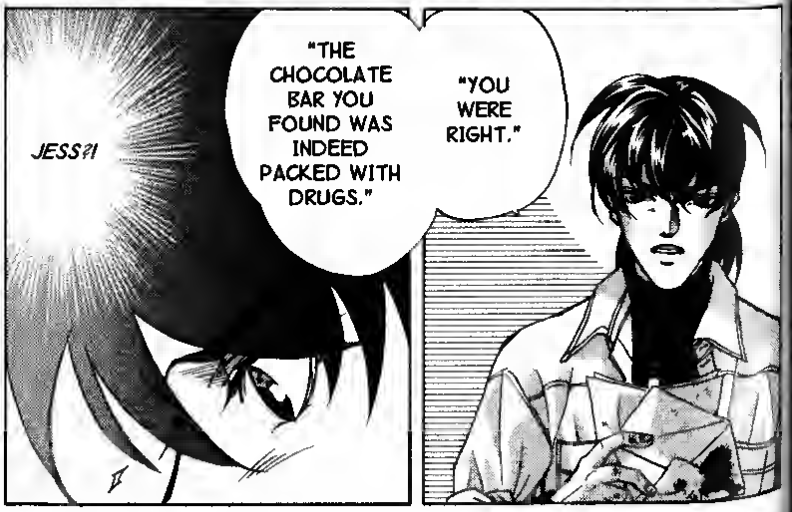
I THOUGHT THINKING LIKE THAT WAS BAD... SELFISH... EGOTISTICAL AND ALL.
OH, NO, MY SON.
JUST GO DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.
YOU WERE ALWAYS A HANDFUL, DEE. USUALLY MORE THAN A HANDFUL... BUT YOU WERE ALWAYS TRUE... ALWAYS HONEST IN THE PATH YOU CHOSE.
That's "Mother" to you.
PHEW.
PENGUIN?
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME ABOUT? OR WOULD YOU RATHER BE ALONE?
I KNOW...
IT'S LATE. YOU SHOULD REALLY GET SOME SLEEP, YOU KNOW.
I'M SORRY. I CAN'T TELL YOU ABOUT IT.
BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO GO, EITHER.
OKAY...
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, DEE.
I... I GUESS I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ABOUT ANYTHING RIGHT NOW.

PHONE
YES, MA'AM. HIS NAME IS JESS LATENER. I'LL HOLD...
I SEE. YES, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
PHONE
DAMN IT. HE DIDN'T SHOW UP AT WORK, EITHER. WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED AFTER I LEFT YESTERDAY?

A MURDER?!
BY JESS. THE ENTIRE PLACE IS SWARMING WITH COPS.
WHERE'D THIS HAPPEN?
BIG, HONKIN' GUN-SHOT WOUND, I HEARD THEM SAY.
YEAH. THEY FOUND SOME STIFF LYING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HALL.

BLOOD?!

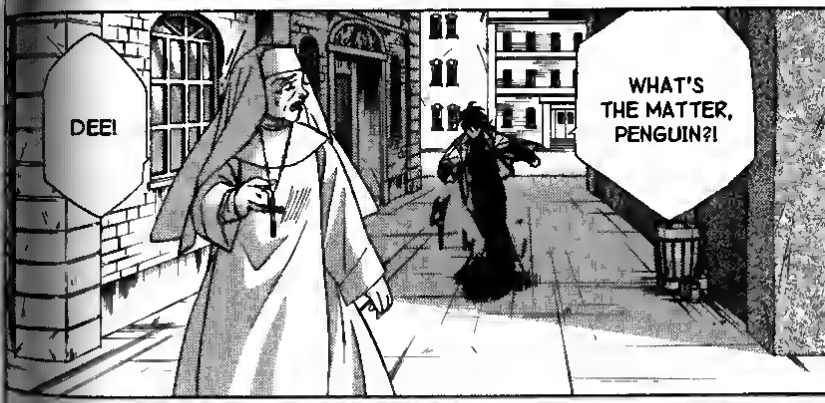

THERE'S A LETTER. A LETTER ADDRESSED TO YOU.
AND LOOK, IN FRONT OF THE DOOR...


JESS?!
"THE CHOCOLATE BAR YOU FOUND WAS INDEED PACKED WITH DRUGS."
"YOU WERE RIGHT."

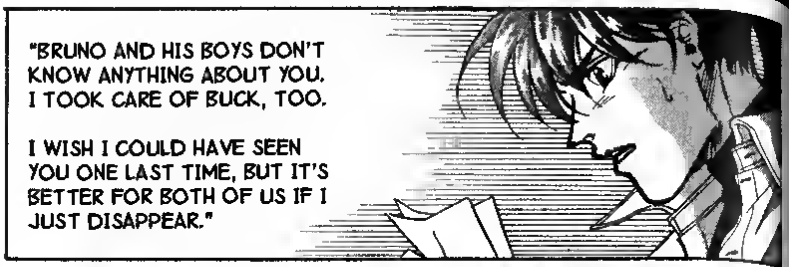
GASP!

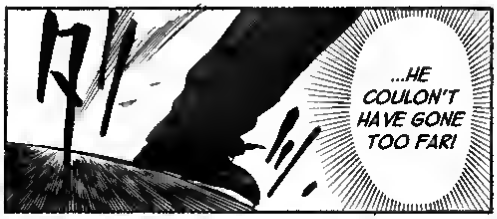
I'M PRETTY SURE THE STIFF WAS THAT ASS-WIPE BUCK...

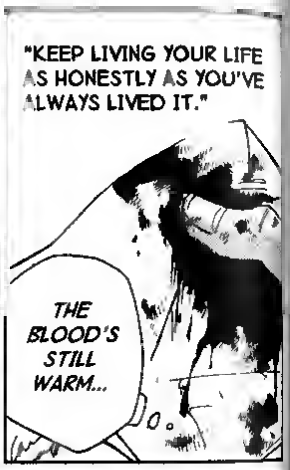
..WHICH MEANS THAT THE PERSON WHO SHOT HIM WAS PROBABLY--

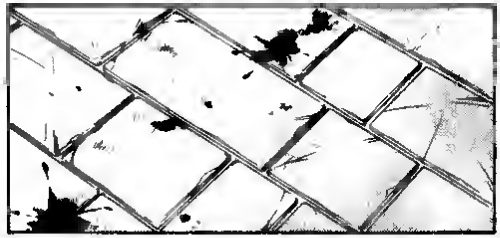

DEE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, PENGUIN?!

WELL, TAKE A LOOK AT IT YOURSELF.
I JUST STEPPED OUT FOR A BIT, BUT WHEN I CAME BACK...


"BRUNO AND HIS BOYS DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU. I TOOK CARE OF BUCK, TOO.
I WISH I COULD HAVE SEEN YOU ONE LAST TIME, BUT IT'S BETTER FOR BOTH OF US IF I JUST DISAPPEAR."


...HE COULON'T HAVE GONE TOO FAR!


"KEEP LIVING YOUR LIFE AS HONESTLY AS YOU'VE ALWAYS LIVED IT."
THE BLOOD'S STILL WARM...



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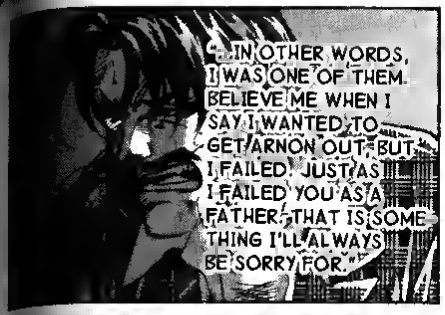
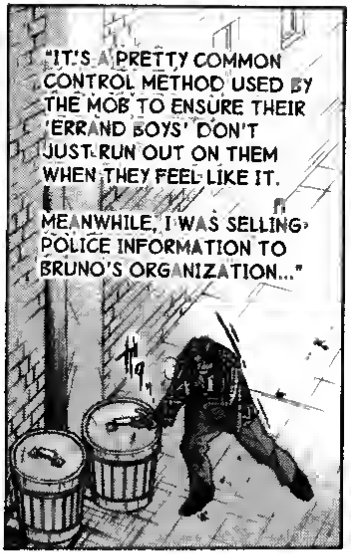
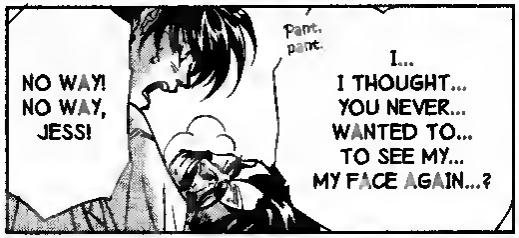

...IN OTHER WORDS, I WAS ONE OF THEM. BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY I WANTED TO GET ARNON OUT. BUT I FAILED. JUST AS I FAILED YOU AS A FATHER. THAT IS SOMETHING I'LL ALWAYS BE SORRY FOR."


"IT'S A PRETTY COMMON CONTROL METHOD USED BY THE MOB TO ENSURE THEIR 'ERRAND BOYS' DON'T JUST RUN OUT ON THEM WHEN THEY FEEL LIKE IT.
MEANWHILE, I WAS SELLING POLICE INFORMATION TO BRUNO'S ORGANIZATION..."

DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE RUN LONG ENOUGH, JESS? I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I FOR ONE AM SURE GETTING TIED OF THIS CHICKEN SHIT.

YOU KNEW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU IF YOU DID THAT, JESS!
YOU KNOW THE RULES ON "TAKING OUT" ONE OF OUR OWN!

WAIT.


NO WAY!
NO WAY, JESS!
Pant, pant.
I...
I THOUGHT...
YOU NEVER...
WANTED TO...
TO SEE MY...
MY FACE AGAIN...?

JESS?
WHY?

JESS!!

DEE...

WHAT THE FUCK? JUST BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T, HUH, JESS? YOU HALF-ASSED MOTHER.
"AS HONESTLY AS YOU ALWAYS HAVE," HUH...?
...LIVE YOUR LIFE...AS... HONESTLY... AS YOU ALWAYS... HAVE.
...YOU... YOU...
OH, THAT'S GOOD. THAT LOOK THERE NICE.
WATCH IT, KID.

OKAY THEN, KID. I LOOK FORWARD TO IT.
I'M GOING TO KEEP LIVING AS HONESTLY AS I CAN...
IF THESE GUYS HAD HALF YOUR FIRE... WHADDYA SAY?
YOU WANT TO COME WORK FOR ME? YOU'D MAKE A GREAT CROOK I BET.
...AND ONE DAY, I'M GONNA BE A COP. BUT NOT A HALF-ASSED ONE LIKE YOU'RE USED TO!

LIKE YOU DON'T IGNORE US ENOUGH ALREADY. BUT THIS TIME, YOU WENT TOO FAR, YOU ASS.
Shaddap
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT THE HELL'S UP WITH US? WHAT THE HELL'S UP WITH YOU?
WHAT THE HELL'S UP WITH BOTH OF YOU, HUH? YOU GUYS LOOK LIKE FRIGGIN' PUNKS, MAN.
IT'S CALLED, PICK UP THE PHONE... OR JUST YELL ACROSS THE HALL, YOU MORON!
TO SEE THEM?
YOU'RE GOING, AREN'T YOU?
Short

WHOA..

DON'T YOU THINK SO?

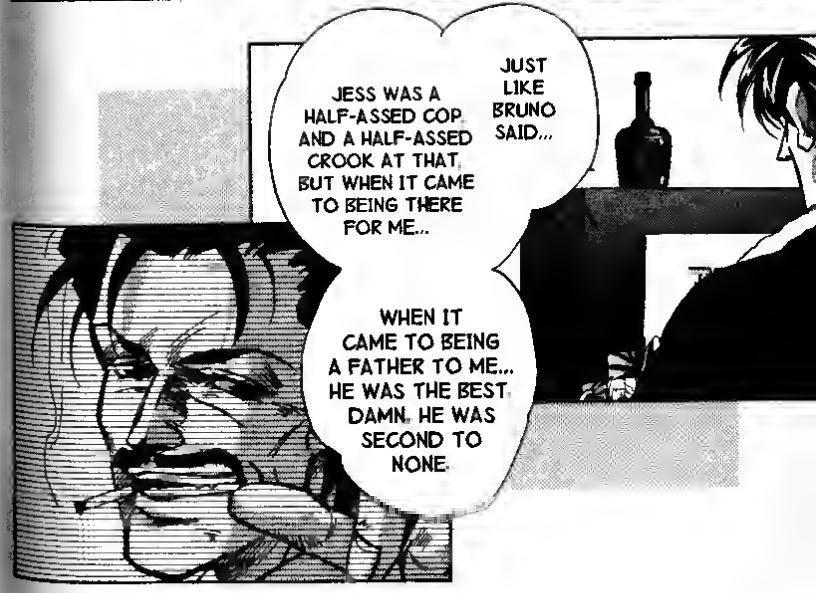
WELL?
YOU THINK SO, DON'T YOU?

YEAH... I GUESS THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS.

THEN IN THE END, THAT'S ALL THAT REALLY MATTERS, ISN'T IT?
YEAH, I THINK SO.

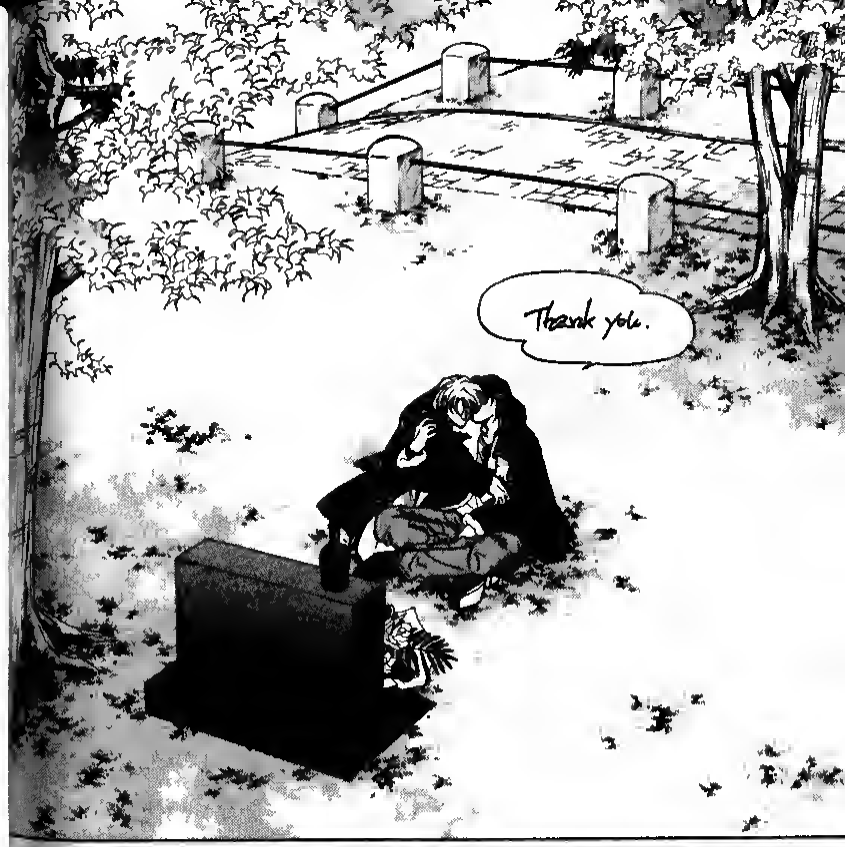
ALL RIGHT THEN. LET'S GO, BOYS!
WAA-AHH?

Grlin
ARNON AND DAD ARE WAITING FOR US.


JUST LIKE BRUNO SAID...
JESS WAS A HALF-ASSED COP, AND A HALF-ASSED CROOK AT THAT, BUT WHEN IT CAME TO BEING THERE FOR ME...
WHEN IT CAME TO BEING A FATHER TO ME... HE WAS THE BEST. DAMN. HE WAS SECOND TO NONE.

YOU DID GOOD, DEE.
YOU KEPT YOUR PROMISE.
Pat

After Talk in FAKE VI.



See you again.
YOU TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING? BECAUSE YOU SHOULD JUST COME OUT AND SAY IT THEN
OF COURSE, I'M JUST TALKING ABOUT STAYING ON THE PATH, OKAY? BECAUSE HONESTLY, YOU'RE A TOTAL SLACKER WHEN IT COMES TO HARD WORK. THAT AND THE FACT THAT YOU LIE LIKE A RUG.

COMING IN MARCH

-FAKE-

VOLUME SEVEN

In this, the final volume of the series, events heat up on the streets...and between the sheets!

As Ryo struggles to figure out his feelings for Dee, the two cops are assigned to serve as bodyguards for a mob-boss's daughter...who is married to the man that killed Ryo's parents!

Overshadowed by jealousy, mistrust and murder, can true love still bloom?

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR PURCHASING FAKE VIII

AS YOU MAY HOTICE, I DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME FOR THE AFTER WORD AS USUAL!! I SPENT IT ALL OH FIXING UP THE MAHGA FOR THE COMICS, SO PLEASE FORGIVE ME! AND I'M SURE EVERYTHIHG I'M WRITIHG WILL JUST BECOME OHE GIANT RUN-OH SEHTENCE DEAL, SO PLEASE FORGIVE ME!!

THAHKS AGAIN FOR ALL YOUR LETTERS OF SUPPORT! BY THE WAY, I HAD ALWAYS WAHTED TO COMMEHT ON THIS, BUT I ALWAYS FORGOT AT THE LAST MINUTE. BACK IH FAKE III OH PAGE 111, I HAD RYO MEHTIOH SOMETHING ABOUT A "FREHCH KISS." WELL, I REALLY MESSED UP ON THAT. SORRY, GUYS!! ALL THIS TIME (OKAY, FOR 20 SOME YEARS NOW), I WAS UHDER THE IMPRESSIOH THAT A "FREHCH KISS" WAS JUST A LIGHT, LITTLE KISS!! WHAT CAH I SAY? I'M SORRY FOR BEIHG SO STUPID!! SOME OF YOU POIHTED IT OUT TO ME RIGHT AWAY, AHD I'M SORRY IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO FINALLY ADDRESS THE MATTER. SORRY, SORRY, SORRY!! (SO A FREHCH KISS IS ACTUALLY THE SAME AS A DEEP KISS. LIKE A REALLY MASSIVE KISS. IT'S EVEN IN THE DICTIOHARY, D'OH!!) BUT IN MY DEFENSE, A LOT OF PEOPLE AROUHD ME DIDH'T KHOW, EITHER. (EXCUSES, EXCUSES!!)

WAIT A SEC, THIS LOOKS MORE LIKE A MOHKEY DAHCE TO ME!
GRRR.
OKAY, 'TIL NEXT TIME...
I SAY THIS EVERY VOLUME.
GO GO BIKKY
GYAAHH!!
JUST KIDDIH'!! SORRY!! KEEP ON DAHCIHG!